PLACES TO GROW

Better Choices. Brighter Future.

A GROWTH PLAN

for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Discussion Paper
Summer 2004

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A Message from the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal

On behalf of the McGuinty government I am eager to hear your input on our discussion paper on a proposed growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Ontarians have asked us to deliver the real, positive change needed to build strong, prosperous communities with a healthy environment and an excellent quality of life. We are responding by acting now so that future generations will not be burdened with many of the challenges we face today, such as sprawl and gridlock.

The strength of the province depends on the strength of its people. By 2031, more than four million additional people will call Ontario their new home and more than two million new jobs will be created. A large percentage of these people will settle in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. We need to make sure that we can accommodate this growth so that they have a place to live, work and play.

Ontario has a strong track record of planning for growth in a way that contributes to our overall quality of life. However, we have fallen behind in meeting the public infrastructure needs that this growth brings.

This proposed growth plan is complex and fundamentally important. It will be the first of its kind in Ontario. It will set out a clear vision and articulate a long-term plan for growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The growth plan will propose a strategy to regenerate Greater Golden Horseshoe communities through creative solutions in three key areas:

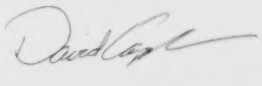
- Where and how we should grow;
- What critical infrastructure we need to support that growth; and,
- What are the most valuable things we need to protect.

Finally, this proposed growth plan will articulate ways to implement the strategy so that it can truly be a vehicle for co-ordinated decision-making and prioritized infrastructure investments. It will also be integrated with the long-term 10-year infrastructure plan for the province that we are also developing.

Municipal and community leaders have been asking the province to take a leadership role in building strong and attractive cities, towns and rural areas – and we are. But we cannot do it all alone. Municipalities, other levels of government, the private sector, community groups, and academic institutions all have to be part of the solutions.

They too are seeking clarity and a sound plan for how this large region should grow over the next 30 years. The growth plan will provide that guidance. It identifies priority urban centres where new economic and population growth will be encouraged, while providing for a greater quality of life and protection of the environment.

I want to hear your views on this discussion paper. We will be hosting public information sessions and encouraging you to submit your input in writing. Please read this document, attend an information session, visit our website and send us your feedback. There are a lot of ways for you to be heard and I look forward to receiving your input.



Hon. David Caplan,

Minister

Tell Us What You Think: Be Part of Planning for a Brighter Future in Ontario

The government of Ontario is now seeking public feedback on the strategies contained in this discussion paper. Implementing our strategic vision demands the contributions of all stakeholders. Governments, institutions, community groups, businesses and residents must all work together.

We will be holding information sessions throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe in the early summer of 2004. Based on input and further technical studies, we will develop a final growth plan and release it in late 2004.

To submit your comments electronically, you can complete an online survey at www.placestogrow.pir.gov.on.ca

Written comments can also be submitted to –

Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe
Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal
Smart Growth Secretariat
777 Bay Street, 16th floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

Fax: 416-585-7639

E-mail: placestogrow@pir.gov.on.ca

For more information or to order additional copies of the discussion paper, please call our toll free line at 1-866-479-9781. Toronto-area residents can call 416-585-6746.

We kindly ask that your comments be received by September 24, 2004.

Introduction

A New Approach to Growth for Canada's Economic Engine

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is one of the fastest-growing regions in North America. It is the economic engine of Ontario and of Canada. By developing and releasing the plan for growth outlined in this discussion paper, the Government of Ontario is recognizing and acting on this reality.

People from other parts of Canada and the world are drawn here because of the enviable quality of life and the economic opportunities that are available. This region offers people a chance to build a great future. We must continue to ensure a high quality of life, economic prosperity, and the creation of quality jobs throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

For the last decade, urban regions across North America and around the world have been competing with each other to attract high-quality jobs and investment in innovative industries. Innovators have recognized that urban regions allow a concentration of public and private resources – skills, knowledge, creativity, investment, infrastructure, natural resources – that drives economic development. They are competing to enhance the quality of life for their communities in order to draw in talent, future investment and innovation.

The Greater Golden Horseshoe has a strong advantage in this competition. Our highly-educated population, strong natural resource base, and tradition of community planning have given us a quality of life that is the envy of the continent. But we cannot rest on our laurels: we can and must plan for future growth.

Clearly we can and must do a better job of planning for the future instead of responding to problems caused by growth as they arise. For example, as traffic congestion increased commute times and lowered air quality, new roads were built instead of investing in transit infrastructure. As urban sprawl kept families away from their homes and swallowed greenspace, farmlands and natural resources, some developments were allowed to proceed haphazardly. As rapid growth in the region put strain on the ability of

Map 1 : Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan Area

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Map 1 : Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan Area

municipalities to respond to and manage new development, previous governments often blamed partners rather than building cooperative working relationships.

The McGuinty government will not squander the opportunity to enhance the competitiveness of what will soon become North America's third-largest region. We recognize the importance of accommodating growth in ways that maintain a high quality of life for our people and present stable and attractive conditions for businesses deciding where to locate jobs and investments. We recognize that urban regions are becoming hubs of commercialization and competition as well as magnets for the highly skilled workers so necessary for innovation and productivity. As urban regions compete for these resources we can no longer afford to think short-term or municipality-by-municipality.

Through our growth plan, the provincial government will show leadership to provide a long-term vision for regional growth. This vision will guide critical decisions and infrastructure investments by all levels of government, by residents, and by businesses large and small for the next 30 years.

The Ontario government has adopted a new approach to planning and investing. We will judge – and wish others to judge – our actions and investments based on whether they achieve meaningful results that matter to people and to communities. As the government makes decisions on where and how to grow, which areas to protect and where to invest our infrastructure, we will not succeed if we only address the problems caused by growth. We will succeed if we harness new growth to ensure greater prosperity for people, improved quality of life and reduced urban sprawl in our communities, Through protection of our greenspace and natural resources we can promote a healthier population.

Toward a Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Over the coming months, the Government of Ontario will translate its vision for growth into a concrete plan to guide decisions on a wide range of issues – land-use planning, urban development, housing, local services, transportation and environmental infrastructure and economic development. We will ensure that better investment decisions are made that will get the results we want for the prosperity of the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

To provide a provincial vision and strategy for managing growth in the region over the next 30 years we will:

- Decide where we want to grow by identifying priority urban centres, strengthening the transportation linkages among them,

and encouraging more compact development in urban areas to maximize the benefits of new growth.

- Protect and manage valuable greenlands, natural systems and agricultural lands so that they continue to contribute a full range of environmental, social and economic benefits to Ontario.
- Use the tools at our disposal to implement these objectives:
  - Invest strategically in infrastructure that supports our growth priorities.
  - Create a legislative and regulatory planning framework that promotes greater collaboration between the province and its partners to strategically accommodate growth.
  - Provide a suite of new regulatory and fiscal tools to assist municipalities and other stakeholders in attracting and locating growth strategically and protecting what is valuable to us.

The **Greater Vancouver Regional District's** *Livable Region Strategic Plan* includes targets for population, housing and employment for the entire region and for municipalities identified as growth concentration areas. Targeting growth in these areas allows more people to live closer to their jobs and make better use of public transit and community services. The plan's target is to capture 70 per cent of growth by 2021 in the growth concentration areas.

Waterloo Region's *Growth Management Strategy* plans for growth over the next 40 years. Key components of the strategy include a countryside line that sets the limit of the region's urban area; a central transportation corridor that features light rail transit connecting key destinations; a greenlands strategy that will help define, identify and protect natural features and linkages; and a re-urbanization corridor that will accommodate the majority of future intensification and job growth.

Focusing development in priority urban centres is good for the quality of life of our people and good for economic growth. By focusing on areas where our capacity to service new development already exists or can be most efficiently provided, we will build vibrant communities where the services people need daily are close at hand. We will ensure better and more affordable choices for where to live and how to get to work.

We will create the conditions for clusters of interrelated and supporting industries to locate in the Greater Golden Horseshoe and compete with each other, making Ontario a leader in innovation. We will maximize the productivity of Ontario's diverse, highly-skilled, well-educated and creative workers, a key source of our strength. And we will better preserve the natural areas that Ontarians cherish for their prosperity, health and recreation.

A Key Component of our Prosperity and Strong Communities Strategies

The growth plan the government will propose is a key component of the provincial government initiatives to ensure Ontario's future prosperity and strengthen its communities:

- **Clean Water, Clean Air and Greenspace Protection.** The growth plan will build on the work of the Greenbelt Task Force, the watershed-based source water protection planning initiative, and planning reform to ensure that our valuable greenlands, agricultural lands, natural resources and watersheds will be protected now and in the future.
- **Planning Reform.** The government's strategic vision will be incorporated into the review of the Provincial Policy Statement, Planning Act, and Ontario Municipal Board reform. While consistent with planning reform, the growth plan will provide more specific direction to municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- **Transportation.** The plan will identify an integrated transportation network that connects the region to vital markets in the United States and other parts of Canada, as well as linking communities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The work of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority will be critical in implementing the transportation directions of the growth plan.
- **Infrastructure Planning.** The growth plan will provide guidance for infrastructure investment decisions through the 10-year infrastructure plan being prepared by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal. The growth plan will allow us to plan infrastructure from a larger-scale, longer-term perspective with an understanding of the real costs of new development and how they will be financed.
- **Strong Rural Communities Plan.** The growth plan will ensure that the province's rural communities also enjoy prosperous economies, a rich cultural and natural heritage, and the capacity to sustain a high quality of life. It will moderate urbanization pressures on smaller communities that want to keep their small-town rural environment.
- **Partnerships.** Implementation of the plan will require collaboration at all levels of government and across all sectors. We must take advantage of the unique relationship between the province and its municipal partners to co-ordinate decisions on land-use planning, transportation and housing development, environmental planning and economic development.

The growth plan builds upon past work of many partners, including municipalities, agencies and boards, and bodies such as the Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel, Toronto Board of Trade, Neptis Foundation, University of Toronto, the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario, the Pembina Institute and various chambers of commerce.

Growth Potential in the Greater Golden Horseshoe

During the 30 year period between 2001-2031, the population of the Greater Golden Horseshoe will grow by almost four million people, and its economy will grow by about two million jobs. Each year, the region receives about half of all new immigrants to Canada[1].

More than 154,000 acres of land in the GTA have been developed for urban uses since 1993, representing nine per cent of the GTA's total land area.

The importance and benefits of new growth are clear. Our society and cultural diversity are our strength and will be the source of continuing growth. It is this growth that allows the region to prosper, generating nearly two-thirds of Ontario's GDP and nearly one-third of Canada's output[2].

Over the past 10 years, the GTA posted the third strongest rate of population and job creation growth in North America.

But we must harness the potential of this growth by planning for it strategically. Land is a scarce commodity: we need it for housing, open space, recreational enjoyment, shopping, transportation and farming. If we continue to consume land for urban development at the rate we have been for the past three decades, we will jeopardize the financial, social and environmental factors that make the region so attractive to new residents and new economic growth.

- Business-as-usual development will consume 1,000 sq km of primarily agricultural land by 2031, an area twice the size of Toronto[3].
- Gridlock will continue to worsen over the next 30 years. Commute times in the GTA could increase by 45 per cent[4]. Gridlock on the 400-series highways is already costing us over $2 billion a year in lost productivity[5].
- Our environment will suffer. Air quality will decline with automobile-related emissions increasing by 42 per cent[6]. The number of smog advisories in the GTA has already increased from one in 1993 to 20 in 2001[7].
- Affordable housing could become harder to find. Currently 20 per cent of all GTA households and 35 per cent of GTA renter households face affordability problems[8].
- More compact development could save about 20 per cent in infrastructure costs compared to existing growth patterns[9].

To reverse this trend and take full advantage of the opportunities presented by new development in the next 30 years, we must implement a strategic vision to ensure that new growth is healthy growth and contributes to the prosperity and sustainability of our communities. To do this, we must maximize the benefits of growth while minimizing the costs.

Planning for growth is not new to Ontario: efforts to guide growth in Central Ontario date back to 1960. Some major exercises for the GTA include the *Toronto-Centred Region Plan* (1970), the *Central Ontario Lakeshore Urban Complex* (1974), *Shaping Growth in the GTA* (1992), the *Report of the GTA Task Force* (1996) and the recent work of the Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel.

Our history of planning, our diverse society, and our abundance of natural resources and greenspace make this region the envy of the continent. However, recently,we have not lived up to expectations. This government's focus is on restoring Ontario's place as a leading jurisdiction for attracting and reaping the benefits of new growth.

A Vision for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

More than anything, the Greater Golden Horseshoe will be a great place to live in 2031. Its communities will be based on the pillars of a strong economy, a clean and healthy environment and social equity.

The Greater Golden Horseshoe will offer a wide variety of choices for living. Thriving, livable, safe and productive urban and rural areas will foster community and individual well-being. The region will be supported by a modern, well-maintained infrastructure built in accordance with a broad plan for growth. Residents will have easy access to shelter, food, education and health-care facilities, arts and recreation and information technology.

Getting around will be easy. An integrated transportation network will allow people choices for easy travel both within and between urban centres throughout the region. Public transport will be fast, convenient and affordable. Roads, while still a significant means of transport, will be only one of a variety of effective and well-used choices for transportation. Walking and cycling will be practical elements of our urban transportation systems.

A healthy natural environment with clean air, land and water will characterize the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Significant natural features, such as the Oak Ridges Moraine and Niagara Escarpment, will be enhanced and protected in perpetuity. They will form the key building blocks of a regional natural heritage system. The region's rivers and streams, forests and natural areas will be protected and easily accessible for residents to enjoy their beauty. Open spaces in our cities, towns and the countryside will provide people with a sense of place.

Unique and high-quality agricultural lands will be protected for future generations. Farming will be productive, diverse and sustainable.

Throughout the entire area, urban centres will be characterized by compact settlement and development patterns and will supply a diversity of opportunities for living, working and enjoying culture. The evolving regional economy of the Greater Golden Horseshoe will have matured into an economic powerhouse of global significance. It will function as Canada's principal international gateway.

The Greater Toronto Area will be a thriving, world-class metropolis with an extraordinary waterfront. And at the heart of this metropolis is Toronto, a celebrated centre of influence for commerce, culture and innovation.

All of this will translate into a place where our residents enjoy a high standard of living and an exceptional quality of life that is world renowned.

Adapted from the Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel

Where and How to Grow

The growth plan will ensure that as the Greater Golden Horseshoe grows over the next 30 years, residents will continue to enjoy a high quality of life.

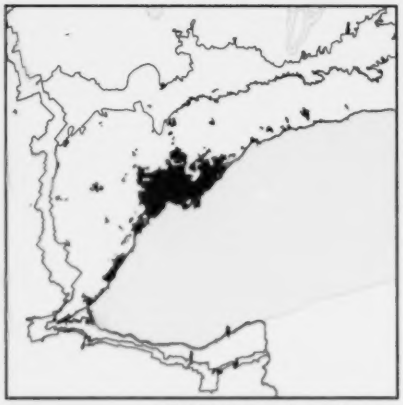
Moreover, it will ensure that the needs of the next generation are not burdened by the decisions that are taken today.

Population Growth 1981-2001

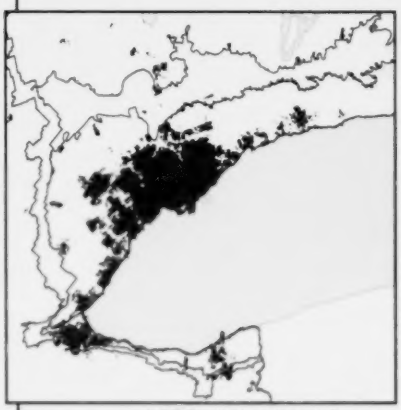
During the past 20 years, we have seen robust growth throughout the region. Overall, the Greater Golden Horseshoe has grown from about 5.4 million in 1981 to 7.8 million in 2001 – an increase of 2.4 million people. Eighty per cent of this growth occurred in the GTA and Hamilton.

All of the "905" regions have seen rapid growth, collectively doubling their population between 1981-2001, while Hamilton and Toronto saw more modest growth of about 15 per cent during the 20-year period. In the outer ring surrounding the GTA and Hamilton, growth has been concentrated in areas north and west of the GTA, with Barrie, Guelph and Waterloo Region accounting for almost half of the growth in the outer ring between 1981-2001.

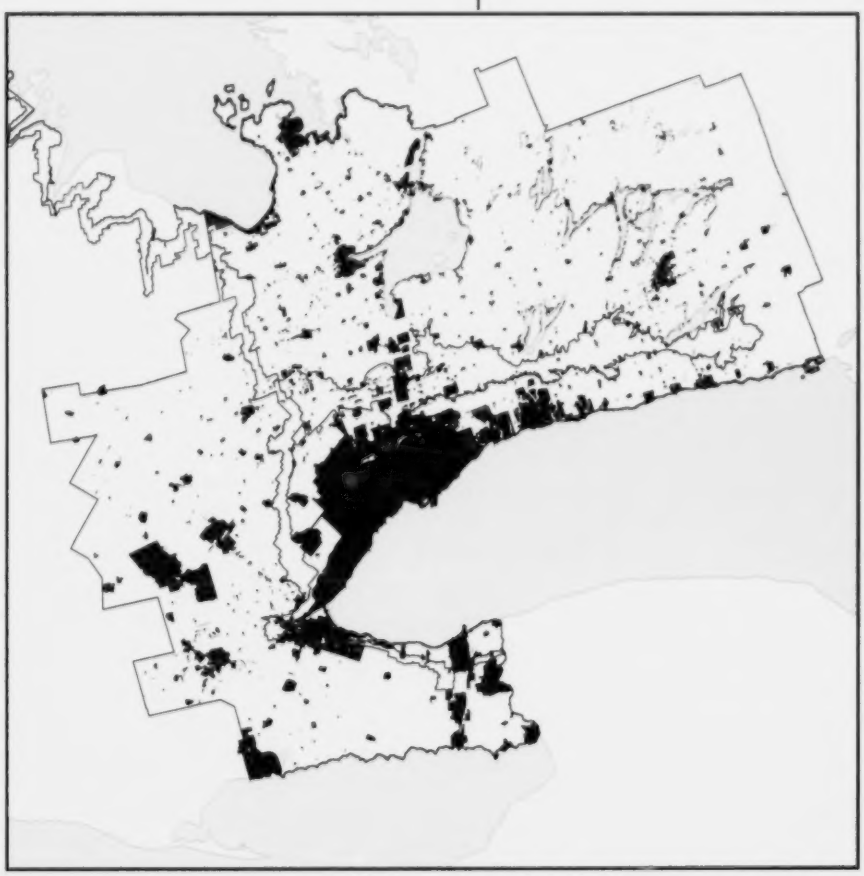
Historical Growth Patterns In The Greater Golden Horseshoe



1967: Urbanized Areas



1992: Urbanized Areas



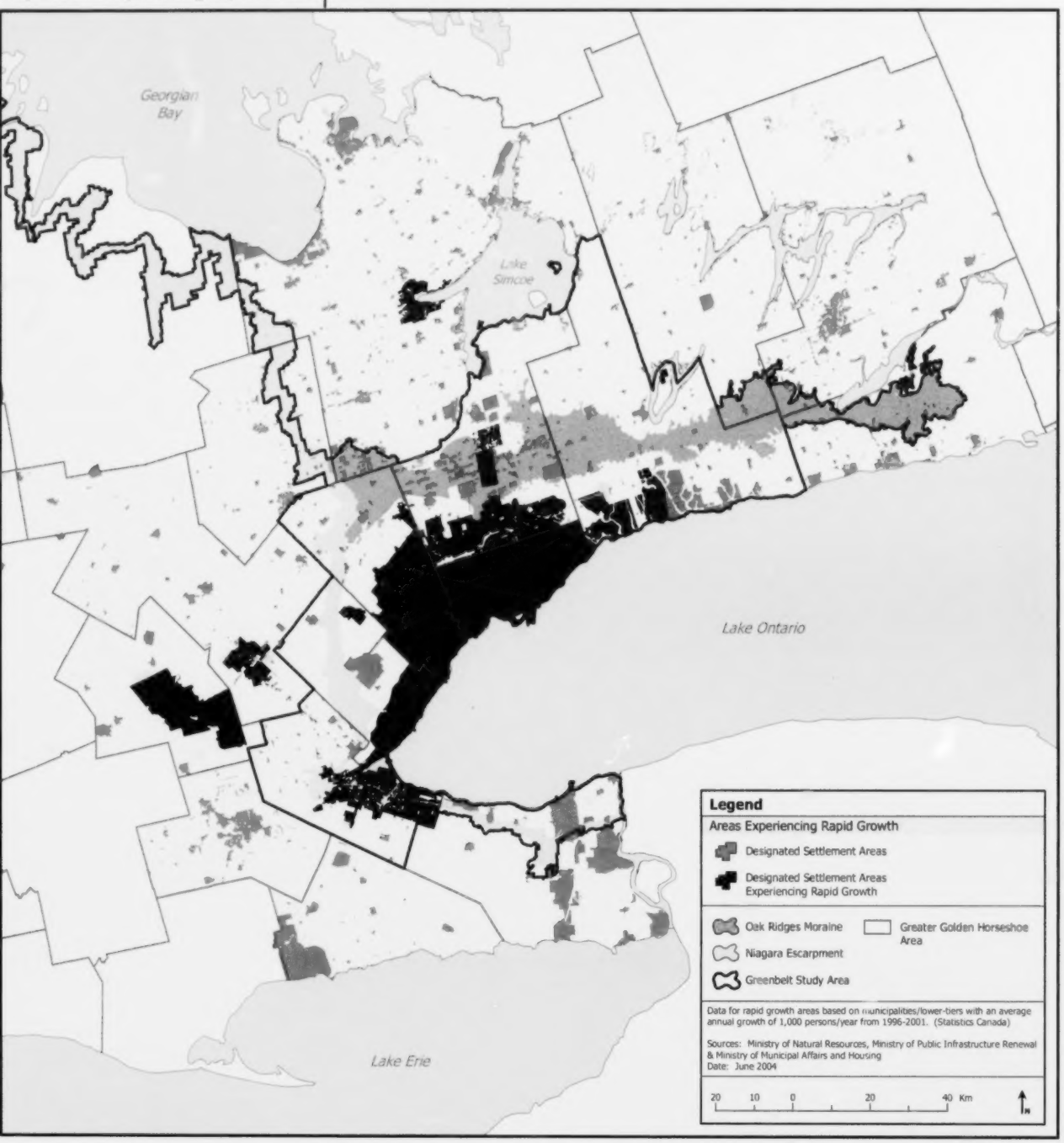
2004: Designated Settlement Areas

Map 2004 : Designated Settlement Area shows data from upper, lower and single tier municipal Official Plans, reflecting lands designated for development to the year 2021. Sources: Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal and the former GTSB.

Future Growth

Based on past and current growth trends, the future population of the Greater Golden Horseshoe is expected to grow by almost four million, bringing the region's population to over 11 million people by 2031. This represents an increase of about 50 per cent over the next 25 years. Approximately 75 per cent of this growth is projected to occur in the GTA and Hamilton with most of the remaining growth expected to occur in the larger urban centres in the outer ring.

Map 2 : Areas Experiencing Rapid Growth


Georgian Bay
Lake Simcoe
Lake Ontario
Lake Erie
Legend
Areas Experiencing Rapid Growth
Designated Settlement Areas
Designated Settlement Areas Experiencing Rapid Growth
Oak Ridges Moraine
Niagara Escarpment
Greenbelt Study Area
Greater Golden Horseshoe Area
Data for rapid growth areas based on municipalities/lower-tiers with an average annual growth of 1,000 persons/year from 1996-2001. (Statistics Canada)
Sources: Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal & Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Date: June 2004
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If present growth trends continue, most of the growth for the entire Greater Golden Horseshoe will occur within the GTA and Hamilton, Barrie and Waterloo-Wellington areas, as highlighted within the dark purple areas shown on Map 2. Together, these areas experiencing rapid growth will account for over 90 per cent of the new growth to the region.

Throughout the region, municipalities have generally designated the places where growth should occur within the 20-year time span of their official plans, although there are some municipalities with a shorter-term land supply (10-15 years). Further, within these time frames, the supply of high, medium and low density lands can also vary, with the supply of low density lands generally being less than for medium and high density lands.

These designated settlement areas, shaded purple on Map 2, comprise the current urban envelope of the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

A large portion of that envelope has yet to be developed. For example, about one-third of the designated urban area of the GTA has yet to be developed.

Various studies suggest that there is sufficient land available within the currently designated urban envelope to accommodate the majority of growth over the next 15 to 25 years[10]. That is, there is the capacity within the areas designated for development to accommodate a substantial portion of the projected four million additional people, even under a growth pattern that is similar to today's. By using our land in a more efficient manner, we will limit pressures to expand our urban boundaries and will be better able to protect prime agricultural lands and greenlands.

Where and how we grow is not only affected by the supply of available land but is also influenced by and influences the pattern of economic development that emerges across the region.

Businesses locate where there are skilled workers, where costs are competitive, where the infrastructure is good, and where their employees can find suitable housing and enjoy a high quality of life.

The most innovative and thriving economies emerge in places where there is a rich diversity of people, skills and knowledge and a high quality of life.

At the same time, by being more efficient and developing primarily within existing urban areas, we can build upon the business and investment attractiveness of existing communities, support our key economic and employment centres and enhance our economy's competitiveness.

Historic growth patterns in central Ontario show that urban land consumption – for residential, commercial, industrial development, roads and servicing – has grown proportionately faster than the population. Between 1967 and 1999 the urbanized part of the GTA increased by 3.6 times while population grew by only 1.9 times.

Growth Plan Objectives

To shape where and how we grow, five main objectives are proposed that seek to maximize existing opportunities to accommodate growth before looking for new growth areas:

1. **Intensification and Compact Development:** to promote the efficient use of land and infrastructure resources within existing designated urban areas throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe by supporting compact form and intensification.
2. **Priority Urban Centres:** to support priority urban centres and emerging urban centres, located within existing and approved urban areas, as residential and employment anchors throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
3. **Future Growth Areas:** to manage the amount of lands required to accommodate future growth through the development of a more strategic approach to expansions of urban boundaries.
4. **Economic Strength:** to promote the economic vitality and competitiveness of our communities through innovative partnerships, supportive tools and maintaining strategic employment lands.
5. **Small Towns and Rural Communities:** to reflect the diverse and local needs of small towns and rural communities by providing tools to assist them in addressing their own unique growth pressures.

Underlying these objectives, the plan will provide municipal governments with a strong vision and framework, plus significant and flexible tools to ensure that growth is implemented in a way that supports shared provincial and municipal objectives to manage growth effectively and efficiently.

Intensification and Compact Development

Housing starts in the major urban areas of central Ontario have increased steadily from 25,000 units in 1993 to 62,500 units in 2003, accounting for three-quarters of all housing starts within the province in 2003.

Efficient use of land is an economic and environmental foundation of Smart Growth initiatives practiced around the world. All the cities and towns of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, large or small, have a foundation of existing infrastructure capacity that can be built upon to increase compact urban form. By making best use of existing infrastructure, we also reduce the need for large, costly investments and maximize the value of the public investment that has already been made.

Many municipalities have considerable experience with compact urban form in their downtown areas. These areas provide a sense of place and history for many communities that have now become leading examples of redevelopment and intensification. The emphasis on strong downtown cores and the regeneration of brownfield sites is in keeping with best practices in urban economic development.

In making more productive use of existing urban areas, the growth plan will emphasize the preservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage of existing communities and their neighbourhoods, building upon the foundations and assets that we have already invested in and value.

Intensification should assist in shaping the evolving form of communities to reflect the cultural and natural heritage and the needs and values of its past and future residents.

Communities must strive for a balanced mix of growth, accommodating both jobs and a range of housing choices. They must also strive to have a range of affordable housing options in the urbanized parts of the region that will help increase housing choice. This will ensure that there is a broad range of choices for people to live closer to where they work.

Providing a balance of jobs and housing also depends on a well placed supply of employment lands. The location of employment lands is important not only to the communities and industries they serve, but is also significant to the overall economy.

Key Redevelopment and Intensification Opportunities

Key opportunities exist throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe to accommodate further growth through redevelopment or intensification of areas with excess capacity.

- Underused brownfields are ideal for redevelopment for industrial, commercial or residential uses.
- Greyfields are also ripe for redevelopment in many communities because they are often located along key transportation routes.
- Areas where school, transit and infrastructure capacity already exist and can accommodate further growth.
- Within urban areas, higher order transportation stations (subway, LRT and GO Rail) are hubs that can be developed to accommodate greater residential and employment capacity.
- Encouraging growth in areas with densities that border on being able to support viable transit and improve the efficiency of the existing system.
- Intensification along higher order transit corridors within urban areas can increase the number of people taking transit without the additional costly investments required for new transit lines.

It is important that the growth plan support municipalities by providing them with the tools necessary to maintain an adequate supply of employment lands that will meet their future needs.

At the same time, in addition to the redevelopment opportunities within existing urban areas, within the urban boundaries of the Greater Golden Horseshoe there are many greenfield sites that are currently undeveloped, but that will likely be developed in the near future. These developments should also look to the application of growth principles, such as efficient use of infrastructure, walkable communities, a mix of land uses and a range of housing and transportation choices.

The plan will lay out a set of tools to encourage and support development within existing urban boundaries. It will do so by addressing barriers that make it less financially viable for developers to invest in existing areas, such as lack of up-front financing for brownfield remediation and strict municipal zoning regulations in urban areas. It will also put in place incentives to encourage developers to take advantage of opportunities in already designated and serviced areas, while making sure the costs of servicing new

Redevelopment Success Stories ...

Cobourg cleaned up a waterfront site containing former industrial lands that housed gasoline and oil storage operations. The site was redeveloped for residential condominiums, parks and open space, a waterfront trail and marina. The area is now a major destination for residents and visitors with increased public open space and recreational uses.

Toronto eased zoning and official plan requirements in the "two Kings" area (King and Parliament Streets and King Street and Spadina Avenue) to address a declining inner-city industrial base and growing demand for live/work accommodation in the core. Previous land-use designations restricted the lands to industrial use only and considered residential uses as incompatible. The result of changing these restrictions has been a greater density and mix of industrial, residential and commercial uses and the revitalization of the neighbourhood.

Markham established a master plan for a future downtown to achieve its vision of accommodating growth without the need to expand into the countryside. Markham Centre will become a vibrant, intensive, mixed-use centre with a distinctive character and a focus for the town's many communities.

Brantford developed a community improvement plan in 2002 to encourage revitalization of its downtown. As one component of a larger business assistance program, it provides direct grants and business incentive programs, including no-interest or low-interest loans and reduced building permit fees, and other measures. So far, more than a dozen projects have been funded, including shops, restaurants and medical projects.

Kitchener has recently passed a new development charges by-law which provides exemptions for development in its downtown area and reduced development charges for new residential development in its central neighbourhoods.

greenfield developments are more fully borne by the beneficiaries – not existing local or provincial taxpayers.

Through the plan, we will continue to review the legislative and regulatory environment to ensure a level playing field for urban redevelopment and intensification.

Strategies

To support implementation of the growth plan, the following potential actions and tools to spur intensification and mixed-use, compact development in existing urban areas could be used. These actions and tools both address barriers to investment in existing areas and also level the playing field in terms of ensuring that new greenfield development bears a fair share of its true costs.

Through the growth plan, the province will encourage compact, mixed-use development within existing urban areas and in new greenfield developments by reviewing current regulatory, fiscal and planning measures to ensure that they promote compact urban form and discourage growth that makes inefficient use of land. Specifically, the province will –

- review the *Development Charges Act* to ensure that new development pays its fair share of the costs of growth and encourages compact urban form as well as consider making changes to the act to provide incentives for redevelopment of existing areas with underused infrastructure capacity
- accelerate brownfields redevelopment by exploring options for easier access to front-end financing, property tax financing and eliminating impediments regarding mortgage financing for remediated properties
- explore the creation of greyfields redevelopment incentives for mixed-use multi-storey development in underused retail areas
- develop standards for greenfield development, including mixed-use, walkability and transit-supportive design standards

- explore the potential use of special purpose municipal economic development corporations as a catalyst for supporting intensification and related objectives in downtowns and other targeted development areas
- work with municipalities to identify and maintain a predictable supply of employment lands across the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The province will also ensure that a wider range of affordable housing and a mix of housing types are built to achieve growth plan goals in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, through the following actions –

- encouraging the construction of more affordable and appropriate housing through capital funding under the federal-provincial Affordable Housing Program
- reviewing existing fiscal tools such as the land transfer tax rebate program to promote resale housing or housing in urban areas
- examine the possibility of a location-efficient mortgage pilot program to provide incentives for living closer to work that does not require commuting by car.

In **Sydney, Australia**, extensive greenfield development has been avoided by developing underutilized sites in the existing urban area. In the 1980s, a little over 60 per cent of new dwellings were built in existing urban areas and almost 40 per cent in greenfield areas. In the early 2000s, after the adoption of a growth management plan, around 75 per cent of dwellings were built in established areas and 25 per cent in greenfields.

The national target of the **U.K.** is to build 60 per cent of new dwellings on previously-developed land by 2008. Each year since 1997 the numbers have increased, achieving 66 per cent in 2003.

Priority Urban Centres

To facilitate development within urban areas and to use land more efficiently, the plan will identify priority urban centres throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe. To do so, we will incorporate the work of both the Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel and the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario.

Priority urban centres are the hubs of employment and residential growth and development. They are key centres that attract industrial and commercial activity, and the public and private institutions of a thriving urban region.

The following criteria have been applied to identify priority urban centres. Priority urban centres –

- are major employment centres (highest percentages of jobs in the region)
- have employment activities of provincial, national or international significance (e.g. location of corporate head offices)
- have both high population (over 60 residents per hectare) and employment densities (over 60 jobs per hectare)

- have transit-supportive densities or borderline transit-supportive densities (over 3,000 person per sq. km)
- are major road transportation and regional transit hubs
- have easy transportation access to major trade corridors and border crossings
- have a diverse mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses
- have infrastructure and redevelopment capacity or opportunities
- provide broad regional level public services, such as hospitals, colleges or universities, social services, etc.
- are well distributed across the region.

Possessing these characteristics makes priority urban centres attractive for further urban growth.

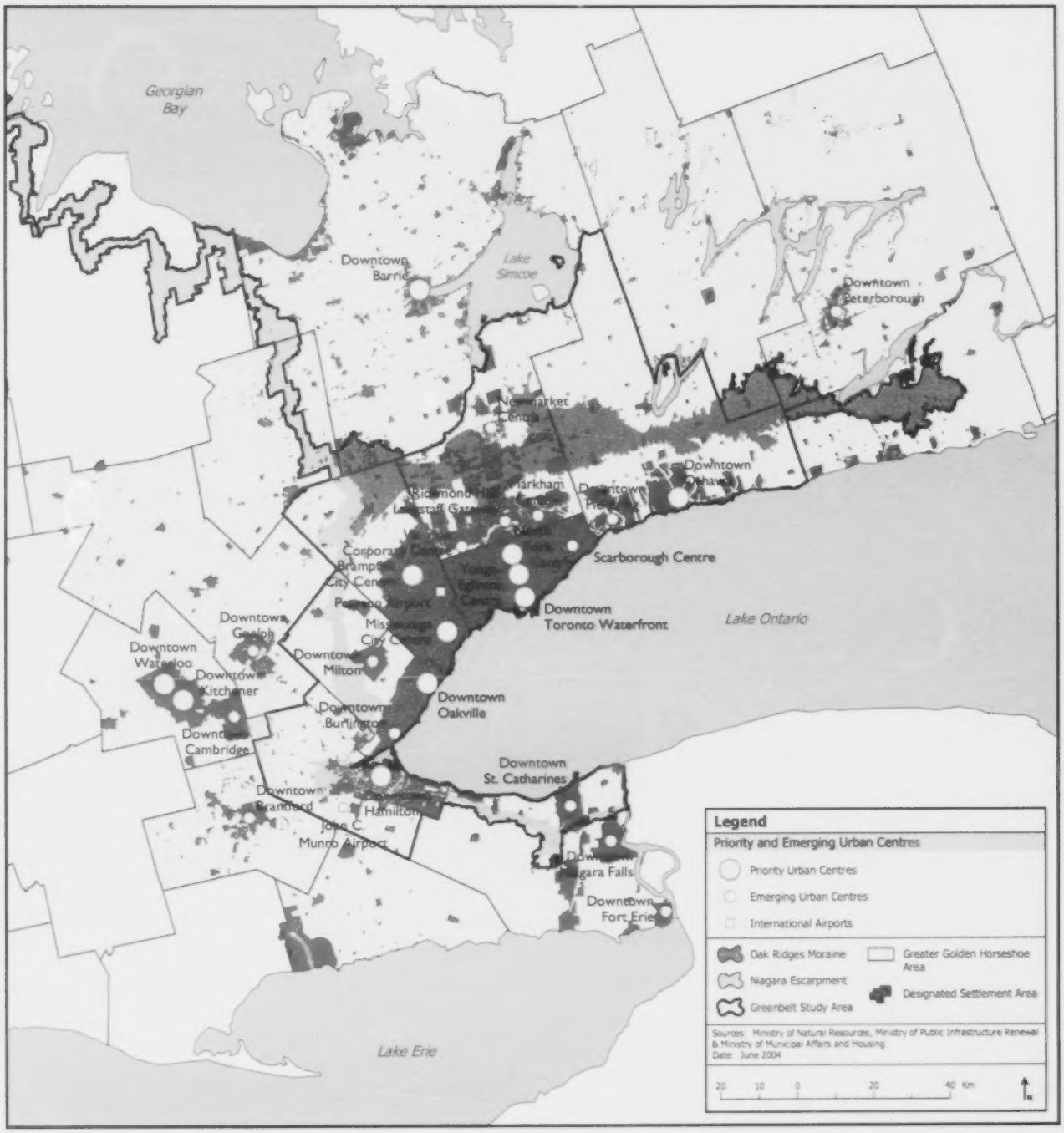
Priority urban centres are generally located in the established downtown areas of the fast growing metropolitan areas of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Their size will vary according to the size and scale of their municipality. In particular, it is recognized that downtown Toronto is the heart of the region and is an international centre of influence for commerce, culture and innovation.

Priority urban centres have existing infrastructure – water, waste water and transportation, plus educational, health and social services, institutions and industrial activity – that can be built upon, and the capacity to absorb further residential and employment growth in an efficient manner.

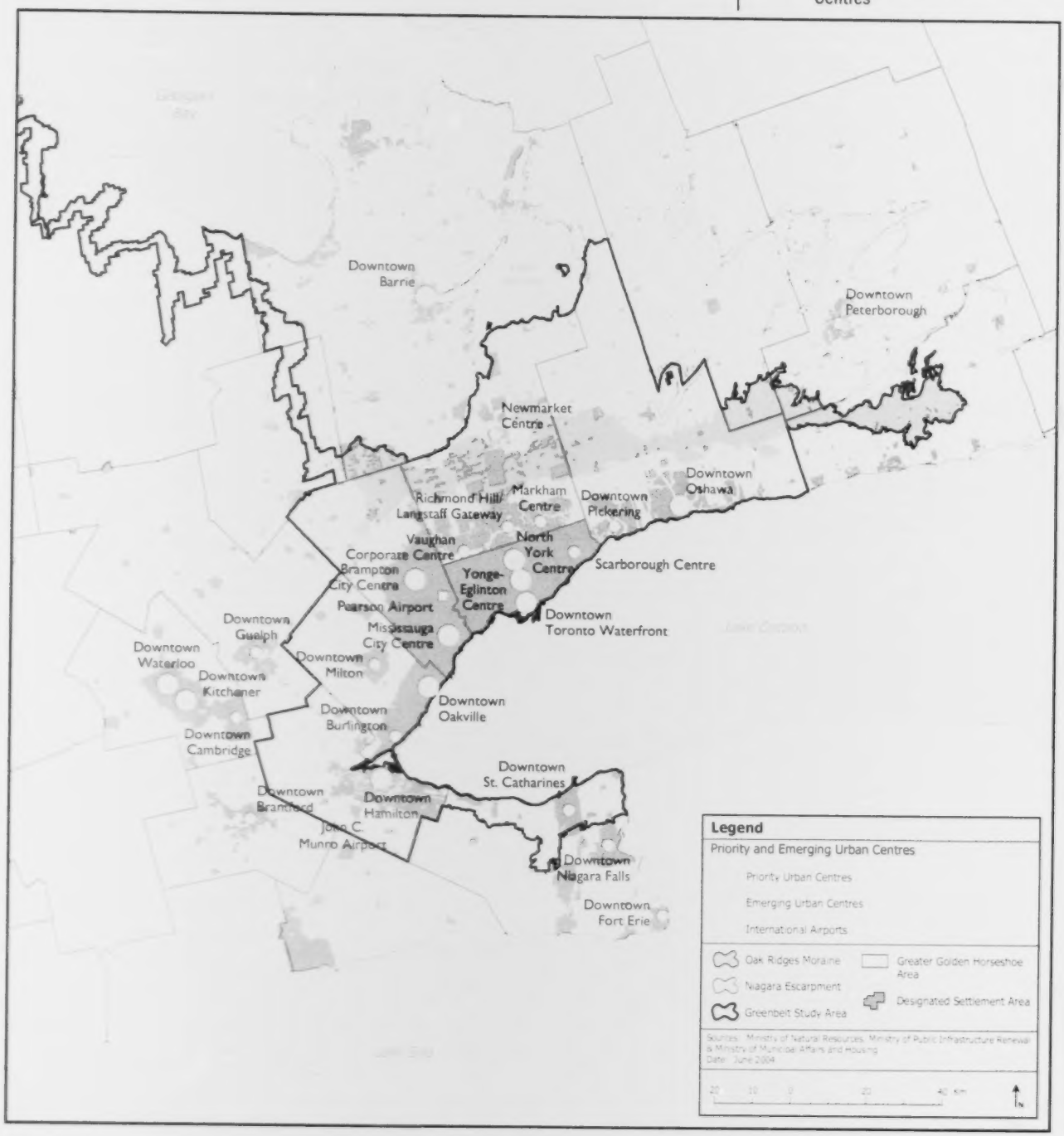
Emerging urban centres areas have some of the characteristics of priority urban centres, but not all. Over time, as the growth plan is implemented and investments are made to attract development to emerging urban centres, they too will become the hubs and emerge as regional centres of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Many of these emerging urban centres have already been identified as targets for future growth in municipal official plans.

In addition, significant infrastructure investment is planned for the Seaton Lands in Pickering. This area is designated urban and is subject to a provincial planning exercise under the *Ontario Planning and Development Act*.

Map 3 : Priority and Emerging Urban Centres



Map 3 : Priority and Emerging Urban Centres



The table below lists the priority and emerging urban centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Urban Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe	
Priority Urban Centres	**Emerging Urban Centres**
Downtown Toronto Waterfront	Scarborough Centre
Yonge-Eglinton Centre	Markham Centre
North York Centre	Newmarket Centre
Mississauga City Centre	Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway
Brampton City Centre	Vaughan Corporate Centre
Downtown Oakville	Downtown Burlington
Downtown Hamilton	Downtown Milton
Downtown Oshawa	Downtown Pickering
Downtown Barrie	Downtown Brantford
Downtown Waterloo	Downtown Guelph
Downtown Kitchener	Downtown Cambridge
	Downtown St. Catharines
	Downtown Niagara Falls
	Downtown Fort Erie
	Downtown Peterborough

Priority urban centres will be the targets for intensification, promotion of mixed use and development of nodes on the transportation network. As such, they will be a key focus of transit investment and investment in other infrastructure required to ensure thriving and desirable communities.

By building upon our priority urban centres and supporting the evolution of our emerging urban centres, we will –

- develop a network of urban centres that will strengthen the economy of the entire region
- form the building blocks to support future growth
- provide a framework to guide future infrastructure investments
- reduce pressures on our valuable natural environment.

Airports

Airports are economic anchors and generators of employment throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The area surrounding Pearson International Airport is a unique employment node that has many characteristics of a priority urban centre. Unlike priority urban centres, it does not offer mixed-use development and is not a desirable area for residential growth. However, this area does serve

a key role in the regional, provincial and national economy as a hub of employment and traded goods.

The role of the John C. Munro International Airport in Hamilton has been growing to serve both expanding regional freight and passenger markets. Hamilton has identified the airport as its top economic development priority. Any future growth in this area should take advantage of the economic opportunities provided by the airport.

There is also a long-term plan to establish the North Pickering Airport which has potential to become an employment hub in the eastern part of the region. It is anticipated that The Greater Toronto Airport Authority will release a draft plan in the fall of 2004 outlining a proposed North Pickering Airport.

Strategies

The province will encourage growth and prosperity in priority urban centres and emerging urban centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe through a number of actions.

To assist urban centres to attract growth, they will be provided with a number of benefits and incentives, which will encourage developers and investors to make location decisions that support the growth plan. The province will -

- make growth-related decisions on infrastructure investments based on whether they will be consistent with growth plan objectives
- align provincial investment decisions with the priorities of the growth plan (e.g. provincial institutions, health care and educational facilities, offices, and other facilities will be located within urban centres)
- establish the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt to clearly delineate those areas that are off limits to urban growth and to provide a valuable legacy of protected natural heritage systems, agricultural land (including the tender fruit and grape lands and the Holland Marsh), non-renewable natural resources, and cultural, recreational and tourism opportunities
- develop new incentives for priority and emerging urban centres, such as planning and environmental approvals and greater zoning flexibility
- explore innovative financial tools such as tax increment financing that may be useful to support investments in infrastructure or improvements to community facilities to attract residential, commercial and industrial development in areas where the market has failed to generate investment
- develop standards and performance measures for urban centres, including jobs, transit ridership, density targets and targets for a range of affordable and appropriate housing choices

- work with municipalities to identify and preserve key strategic employment lands in urban areas that can be readily serviced
- look at opportunities to streamline the environmental assessment process as it relates to critical infrastructure and transit projects in priority and emerging urban centres
- identify strategies and opportunities to develop the Seaton Lands as a model development community that provides balanced housing choices, jobs and greenspace.

Future Growth Areas

As noted previously, recent analyses suggest that overall most municipalities have sufficient land designated to accommodate urban growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe for the next 15 to 25 years, even without implementing compact urban form measures as proposed in this discussion paper. Through the support of priority urban centres and a greater commitment to compact form and intensification, this time period could be extended.

However, those same analyses also indicate that there are varying growth pressures throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Not all areas are growing or experiencing growth pressures at the same rate.

While government policies and decisions do impact the rate at which some communities grow, it is important to note that there are a number of external and market forces (such as the global economy, shifts in technology, trade developments, etc.) that also have a significant impact on the growth patterns of our communities.

Given the differences in growth pressures throughout the region, it may be necessary to consider expansions to urban boundaries in some areas to accommodate the projected growth for the overall Greater Golden Horseshoe. In anticipation of this, the plan will identify areas that will be further assessed for their ability to accommodate additional growth beyond what is currently planned for in their municipal official plans over the long term.

These areas include –

- the areas of the GTA that are south of the Oak Ridges Moraine and outside the proposed Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt
- Hamilton, south of the Niagara Escarpment
- Barrie
- the Kitchener-Waterloo area.

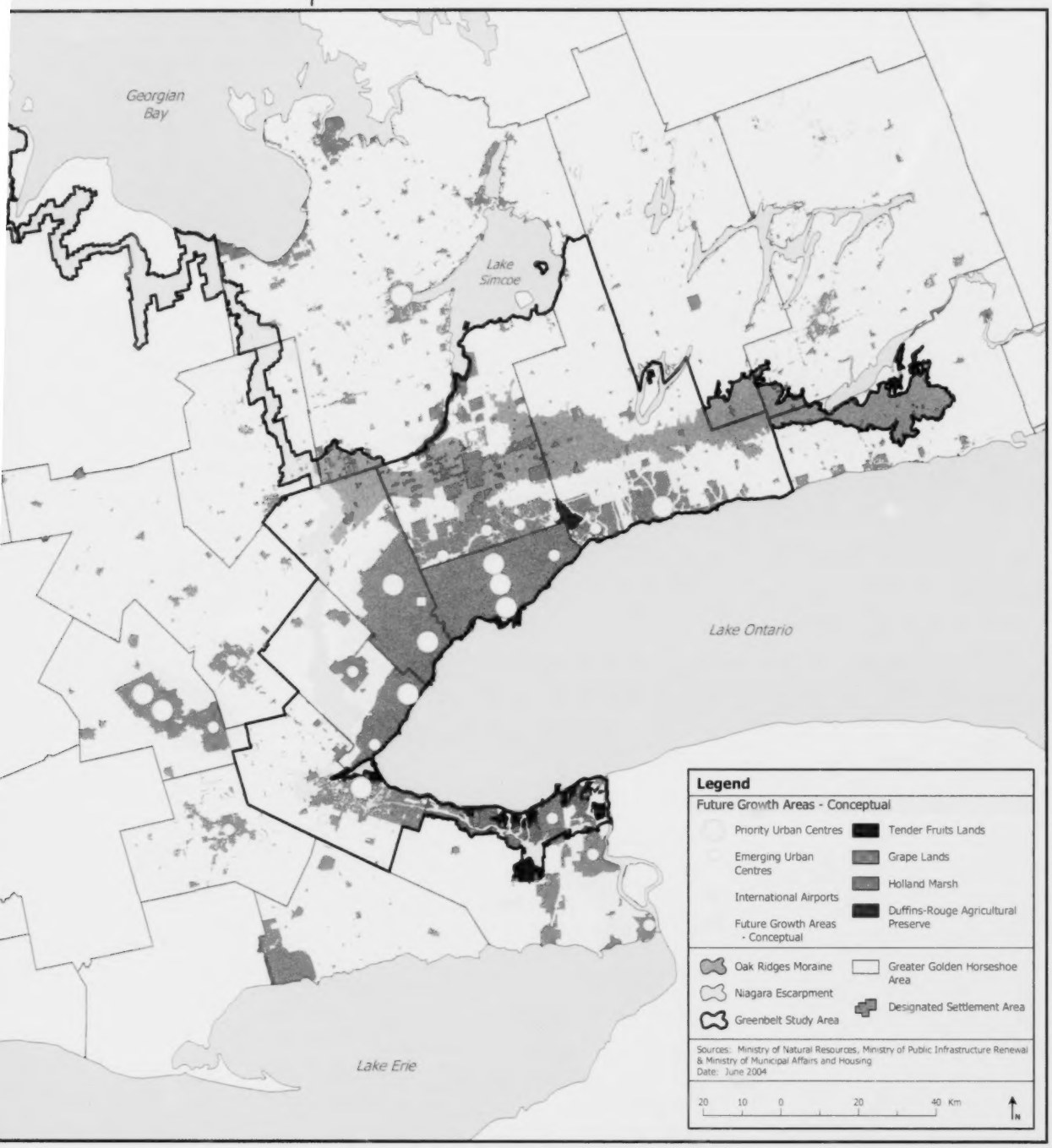
These areas have been identified for a variety of reasons. They have traditionally experienced a faster rate of growth due to such factors as –

- the availability of infrastructure or the ability to provide it
- their strong, dynamic local economies
- their proximity and access to transportation networks and trade corridors
- the availability or accessibility of employment and a range of choices for affordable housing.

Niagara-Fort Erie

In addition, the growth plan will include the Niagara-Fort Erie area south of the Niagara Escarpment as an area to be assessed for its potential to accommodate additional growth. While this area has not traditionally experienced a high rate of growth, it does possess many of the same attributes associated with the other areas.

Its greatest strength is its favourable location in proximity to major U.S. markets. This locational strength will be enhanced by capacity improvements already underway to the U.S. border crossing at Fort Erie. One objective of the assessment will be to examine whether encouraging development in this area can help relieve development pressures on tender fruit and grape lands.



In order to determine the implications of further growth in these areas, shown on Map 4, the province will commit to partnering with area municipalities to assess -

- economic development and growth potential
- the environmental capacity (air, water, land) and the potential impacts of additional growth
- long-term infrastructure needs and costs to encourage and support growth.

While there are areas of the Greater Golden Horseshoe that may experience population growth pressure beyond what their urban boundaries may be able to accommodate, other areas where growth rates are slower should not require expansions in the short term.

Adjustments to expand urban boundaries over the next five years should be considered only within the five areas identified in this plan as having the potential to accommodate future growth, provided –

- there is less than a 15-year supply of land available
- the proposed expansion provides a balance between population and employment growth (target ratio of 2:1)
- there is a range and mix of housing to fulfill the needs of the identified housing market
- the municipality has planned to accommodate a minimum of 40 per cent of the projected growth through intensification
- a transportation infrastructure plan to support the growth plan has been incorporated
- the environmental capacity to support the projected growth can be demonstrated, particularly sustainable water-taking
- municipalities have sustainable water and sewage services to support the projected growth
- natural heritage systems and resources, including areas inside and outside the greenbelt, have been planned for and protected as part of any expansion proposal
- municipalities have a plan to ensure that the costs of new development are borne fairly by the beneficiaries of new development
- municipalities give appropriate consideration to source water protection planning.

It is important to note that communities outside of these five future growth areas will continue to grow. They will continue to provide options for population and economic growth and will be required to employ the same principles using land and resources in an efficient manner, maximizing the use of existing infrastructure, and maintaining an adequate supply of strategically located employment lands.

Many of these communities outside of the five future growth areas have a sufficient supply of designated lands to accommodate growth over the next 20 years and beyond, and should not require boundary expansions during the first five years of the provincial growth plan. Any proposals to expand urban boundaries in these areas will need to be consistent with the upper tier growth plan (see below) and the directions provided in the growth plan.

Strategies

The plan will propose the following actions to support a consistent and effective management of growth throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe. These actions are aimed at increasing the collaboration between the province and municipalities in planning for the future growth needs of the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Through the growth plan, the province will –

- work with municipalities to conduct regular and co-ordinated population and employment growth projections
- allocate the results of the projections to upper-tier municipalities throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- require upper-tier and single-tier municipalities to prepare growth plans in compliance with the plan, that –
  - establish goals and objectives to promote intensification
  - co-ordinate the environmental assessment and land-use planning process and infrastructure planning to ensure that appropriate infrastructure capacity is in place to support planned growth
  - include infrastructure plans and financing plans to support intensification and growth within priority urban centres and to ensure the costs of development are borne fairly by beneficiaries
  - establish regional standards for regional and local phasing of infrastructure and capital works investment to support intensification and growth within priority urban centres
  - establish regional standards for regional and local phasing strategies to accommodate at least 40 per cent of new growth through infill and intensification
  - require development of performance measures and five-year review of the (upper-tier and single-tier) plans
  - identify and preserve natural heritage systems and other valuable resources such as mineral aggregates, specialty crop lands, prime agricultural lands, water and air quality
  - provide direction to municipal official plans and capital budgets.

Economic Strength: Attracting the Best Skills and Brightest Innovations

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is Canada's premier wealth-generating region. Ontario's prosperity depends, in large measure, on the ability of the region to compete with major city-regions across North America and around the world.

A key strength of the Greater Golden Horseshoe economy is its diversity relative to competing regions across North America. This

region is internationally competitive in a wide range of business clusters, ranging from advanced manufacturing and automotive industries, to information and communications technology, biotechnology, financial and business services, creative industries and tourism.

The region is also highly export-oriented, with strong trade ties to the U.S. depending on efficient flows of people, goods and information along trade corridors to nearby border crossings, through international airports and ports and sophisticated telecommunications networks.

The GTA produces nearly 20 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product.

Toronto plays a unique and vital role in the international competitiveness of the region. Downtown Toronto competes with major international centres in providing a critical mass of specialized financial and business services, medical and related sciences facilities, creative industries, education, research and cultural institutions.

A growth plan for this region's future must and will focus on making it a more attractive place for businesses and workers to invest their skills and capital. It will do so by enhancing the high quality of life, by lowering the costs of working and doing business in the area, and by maintaining the diverse character of the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

To achieve these goals the growth plan will support vibrant downtowns and urban areas, manage congestion, reduce commute times, and protect the natural heritage and greenspace system. By linking transportation and other infrastructure investments to growth objectives, the plan will ensure a transportation network that moves people and goods efficiently within the region and along the major trade corridors to border crossings in the south and west.

A World Bank study found that higher transit ridership correlated to greater overall economic success and a higher standard of living in the world's major cities.

In addition, the provincial government will support the economic diversity that is a key strength for the region. We will support the wide range of business clusters in which we are already internationally competitive – from advanced manufacturing and automotive industries, to information and communications technology, financial and business services, creative industries and tourism – while ensuring that the conditions are in place for new, innovative businesses to locate strategically in a region with convenient infrastructure and close proximity to the United States.

Strategies

The growth plan will promote economic development in the Greater Golden Horseshoe by:

- Removing disincentives to development in urban centres and establishing urban economic development tools to attract investment, including Tax Increment Financing, brownfield redevelopment incentives, and economic development corporations.

- Improving transportation efficiency for workers and goods both within the region and across its borders to the United States.
- Improving the efficiency of key infrastructure by making more strategic investments across the region, and ensuring that infrastructure costs are more accurately reflected in the costs of development and the provision of services.
- Ensuring that a diversity of employment lands are available and can be readily serviced to provide flexibility in accommodating the needs of a wide range of businesses.

The government will also implement complementary economic development strategies such as:

- Partnering with business and economic development organizations in the urban centres to develop and implement innovative and forward-thinking economic strategies that build on the strength of local industry clusters and economic assets, including universities, colleges, research and training institutions, ports, airports and business networks.
- Working with business cluster leadership groups and local economic development organizations in the urban centres on cluster development initiatives, such as the financial, medical sciences, and creative clusters in Toronto, the biotechnology and advanced materials management clusters in Hamilton, the wine and tourism clusters in Niagara, and auto-related industries throughout the region.
- Implementing Ontario's commercialization strategy to link public research institutions with companies that can move the research into the market, help universities, colleges and hospitals to make promising research investor-ready, and help institutions establish pools of seed capital to help commercialize the best ideas.

Small Towns and Rural Communities

While the strategies of the growth plan will largely focus on making efficient use of land and resources within existing urban areas, it is recognized that there are vast tracts of land outside these areas. Such lands contain hundreds of small communities as well as natural and resource areas that should be protected from the impact of growth and development.

Strong rural communities are key to the health and vitality of the province. Ontario's rural communities are diverse and have different characteristics and unique needs. Communities across Ontario face financial, economic, social and environmental challenges. Rural communities need a different approach than urban centres to address these challenges because they often cover broad geographic areas, and have smaller, more dispersed populations, smaller tax bases and a higher dependency on resource industries.

The plan for Growing Strong Rural Communities is currently under development to respond to these, and other, diverse needs of rural communities.

The province will work with rural communities to ensure that new development reflects local goals and visions and supports the viability and vitality of rural communities. Although the primary focus of infrastructure planning to support the growth plan will be to support future growth, it is also recognized that maintaining and renewing infrastructure is critical to economic prosperity, public safety and a high quality of life in rural Ontario.

Building on the recommendations of the Greenbelt Task Force and the Plan for Growing Strong Rural Communities, the growth plan will establish measures to foster the vitality of rural communities, including –

- encouraging sufficient population and employment growth within existing rural settlement area boundaries to sustain and promote local economies and community services
- providing direction on the type of uses that are complementary and compatible with small rural communities
- ensuring that provincial infrastructure strategies for rural communities focus on supporting municipalities in determining where infrastructure gaps exist, maintaining and renewing existing infrastructure, and building new infrastructure critical to the viability and vitality of rural communities
- examining how fiscal and regulatory tools could be used to better support rural communities
- promoting the revitalization of downtown areas, waterfronts and redeveloped brownfields in rural communities that will support economic vitality and opportunity
- encouraging communities to develop partnerships to capitalize on economies of scale, access to professional and technical expertise and to share best practices
- promoting the development and use of multi-purpose trails for biking and walking, and the use of public transit (where available).

Infrastructure to Support Growth

We need to ensure that we are maintaining the infrastructure that we currently have, and, at the same time, ensure that we can accommodate new development in the most effective way. The cost of maintaining existing infrastructure and developing new infrastructure is significant.

The success of the plan will be dependent on finding creative partnerships and cost-effective ways to manage our assets and to make the investments we need in a manner that is affordable to families and businesses.

To ensure value for money, use of existing infrastructure must be optimized. Ideally, investment in new infrastructure should be paid for by those who benefit from it. To ensure that resources are conserved and the environment is protected, infrastructure investment should support a pattern of development that emphasizes compact urban form within the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

A more compact and efficient development pattern could save over 20 per cent in infrastructure capital costs over the next 25 years in the GTA compared to current development patterns.

Infrastructure decisions made today – in transit and transportation as well as water and wastewater pipes, hospitals, schools, cultural institutions, energy facilities, transmission lines, and waste facilities – will help determine patterns of growth and living for tomorrow. How we grow also affects the cost of growth. It has been estimated that over 20 per cent of infrastructure capital costs could be saved over the next 25 years in the GTA by moving from lower density development to a more compact and efficient development patterns.

The growth plan will establish a new approach to infrastructure planning and investment by –

- optimizing the use of existing infrastructure
- identifying strategic infrastructure investments to support urban growth and development in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, while protecting the environment; and identifying how to pay for infrastructure investments
- establishing a more integrated transportation network to improve the movement of goods and services and choices for people
- co-ordinating long-range provincial infrastructure plans in partnership with the municipal and federal governments and other partners.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal is developing a framework that will guide the Ontario Government and its partners in selecting the best financing and procurement options for public infrastructure. The framework will establish clear guidelines for financing and procuring public infrastructure assets guided by the following fundamental principles:

- the public interest is paramount;
- value for money must be demonstrable;
- appropriate public control/ownership must be preserved;
- accountability must be maintained; and
- the processes must be fair, transparent and efficient.

Strategies

The plan will identify a set of criteria to be applied to provincial infrastructure investment in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Based on these criteria, priority investments will be integrated into the *new 10-Year Strategic Infrastructure Investment Plan* currently being developed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Provincial actions include –

- focusing infrastructure investment on priority urban centres and, through a phased approach, in emerging urban centres
- evaluating infrastructure investment projects according to criteria such as –
  - consistency with the growth plan
  - promoting the application of growth standards in priority urban centres and emerging urban centres
  - consistency with proposed Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt principles for infrastructure siting and design
  - minimizing impact on natural heritage systems, agricultural lands and other natural resources
  - identifying and utilzing existing capacities
  - co-ordinated planning with adjacent jurisdictions
  - analysis of the social impacts
  - environmental impacts can be mitigated or minimized
  - analysis of economic and financial impacts and how to pay for infrastructure investments
  - demonstrated life-cycle costing of investment
  - infrastructure is transit-supportive.

Integrated Regional Transportation Network

Sustainable communities must be linked through an integrated transportation network. An integrated transportation network in the Greater Golden Horseshoe must connect the region to vital markets in the U.S. and other parts of Canada, as well as connecting the people living and working in the communities within the region.

Roughly 70 per cent of GTA highways are almost at total capacity during rush hours.

The region's transportation systems are vital to the success of all other parts of Ontario and of Canada, since much of the wealth of the province and the nation passes through the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Pearson International Airport is the largest airport in Canada and is the main international gateway. Much of eastern Canada's and northern Ontario's trade must pass through the region, by truck,

In Vancouver, SkyTrain transit stations have been a catalyst for regional town centres. Each centre is intended to serve 100,000 to 200,000 people living and working in the area.

train or ship, on its way to markets. Our transportation choices and priorities will be a key determinant of the economic competitiveness of the province and the country and critical to attaining the goals of the growth plan.

In moving people through the urbanized parts of the region, transit will be the first priority for investment. Our objectives are to grow transit ridership in the urban centres, manage congestion and reduce commuting times. To achieve these objectives, even greater investments will be needed in the transit systems and vehicle fleets, so that people can make better transportation choices and have the option of leaving the car at home when they travel for work, for school and for leisure activities.

In addition, strong efforts will be made to link investments in transportation to the growth policies and plans implemented at the provincial and municipal levels. Compact form, mixed use and higher densities will need to be supported by complementary investments in the transit systems serving these communities.

Building a more effective transit system is more than just building infrastructure. It is also about the co-ordination and integration of transit services across municipal boundaries. It is about an integrated ticketing system that allows customers to move seamlessly across the region, without having to worry about having the right change in their pockets. It is about having a comfortable, dependable and reliable transit system that is responsive to customer needs, rather than having customers plan their days around complicated and inconvenient transit schedules.

The work of the new Greater Toronto Transportation Authority will be critical in implementing the transportation directions of the growth plan in the GTA and in rationalizing the provision of service across many different service providers. It will build upon existing plans, such as the GO Transit 10-year capital plan and the TTC Ridership Growth Strategy.

While transit is the priority for moving people in the urban parts of the region, we will also need to invest in trade corridors to move people and goods across long distances and to the border crossings. Rail and highway corridors are critical to our trading and tourism economies. But these must be planned properly, to ensure that we do not fuel sprawl and to minimize impacts on the environment.

While we must focus on the economic imperative of effective movement of people and goods within and through the region, we must also recognize how critical it is to provide safe and efficient movement of people between their homes, jobs, friends' homes, schools, cottages and recreational activities. They also need the assurance that emergency vehicles can reach them in their time of need.

All of these elements contribute to vibrant communities and a high quality of life for all.

To ensure that we achieve the separate and interrelated needs of the regional transportation network, it is necessary to identify specific strategies. These strategies aim to increase the number of people using transit for most of their trips within the Greater Golden Horseshoe and to reduce the time that people spend commuting to work.

Strategies for Moving People

Transit is our main priority for moving people in the urban parts of the region. In order to achieve our growth objectives, we will need to change today's transportation habits. We will need creative and innovative approaches.

To accomplish this, and to support the development of priority and emerging urban centres, the following overarching strategies are planned as illustrated on Map 5.

1. Build Urban Transit

In our most urbanized regions, such as Toronto and Mississauga, we need to invest in the expansion of higher order transit systems. These are the systems that provide the strongest incentive to build mixed-use and high density development at key nodes and centres. This discussion paper has a vision to pursue a variety of system expansions over the next 30 years, including –

- building and improving transit corridors along key routes, in already built-up areas such as St. Clair Avenue in Toronto
- extending the subway system, first to York University and over the longer term extending rapid transit into Vaughan, Richmond Hill and other centres
- building urban transit systems in the urbanizing areas, like the Mississauga Transitway and the 407 Transitway and the York Region BRT.

Investments of this nature will support and enhance the planned growth, including brownfield and greyfield redevelopment, in priority urban centres.

2. Establish New Interregional Transit Services

The largest growth rate in travel demand in the Greater Golden Horseshoe is not in moving people to downtown Toronto or within individual communities. It is found in moving people across regional boundaries, connecting communities like Mississauga with Vaughan, Pickering with Markham, Toronto with Richmond Hill, and so on. This growth in travel is in all directions.

Just about as many people commute from Toronto to York Region, as those who commute from York Region to Toronto.

On an average day in the GTA and Hamilton, more than 62 per cent of all trips are made by car, 13 per cent by public transit and 6.3 per cent by walking or cycling.

46 per cent of households in central Ontario have two or more cars.

Unfortunately, our transit systems have not been able to keep up with this demand, so people have been forced to rely on their cars.

Our vision for the future is an interconnected system of transit corridors, providing a grid across the region – north to south and east to west. This system will involve buses on roads and highways to begin with, gradually becoming more intensive as demand warrants, with priority features to speed buses through intersections; providing dedicated lanes; building dedicated routes for transit only; and ultimately moving to rail-based transit where it makes sense.

These corridors will accommodate all transit vehicles, whether operated by GO Transit, local transit authorities or intercity bus companies. All of this is to provide the incentive for people to get out of their cars and make the move to transit.

3. Strengthen the GO Transit Rail System

GO Transit handles 44 million riders annually. Estimates suggest that this ridership displaces one billion auto kilometres annually. If all of GO Transit's riders were to drive cars, 48 lanes of new highway would need to be constructed to accommodate the increase in traffic.

GO Transit's rail network is the most effective way of moving people to Toronto from the regions. Each 10-car GO train can carry the same number of people as 1,400 cars, resulting in a significant relief from congestion[12]. However, growth in the GO system has been constrained due to a lack of rail line capacity.

The vision for the GO system is to build its capacity by –

- adding new tracks along the Lakeshore corridor, stretching from Hamilton in the west to Oshawa in the east, to accommodate additional trains
- moving to all-day, two-way service on all corridors, including Milton, Georgetown, Bradford, Richmond Hill and Stouffville
- extending GO rail service to Barrie
- establishing new services on additional corridors or extending existing services as demands warrants
- adding rolling stock and maintenance and storage facilities to accommodate this growth.

Through these measures, the objective is to build GO ridership by a minimum of three per cent each and every year.

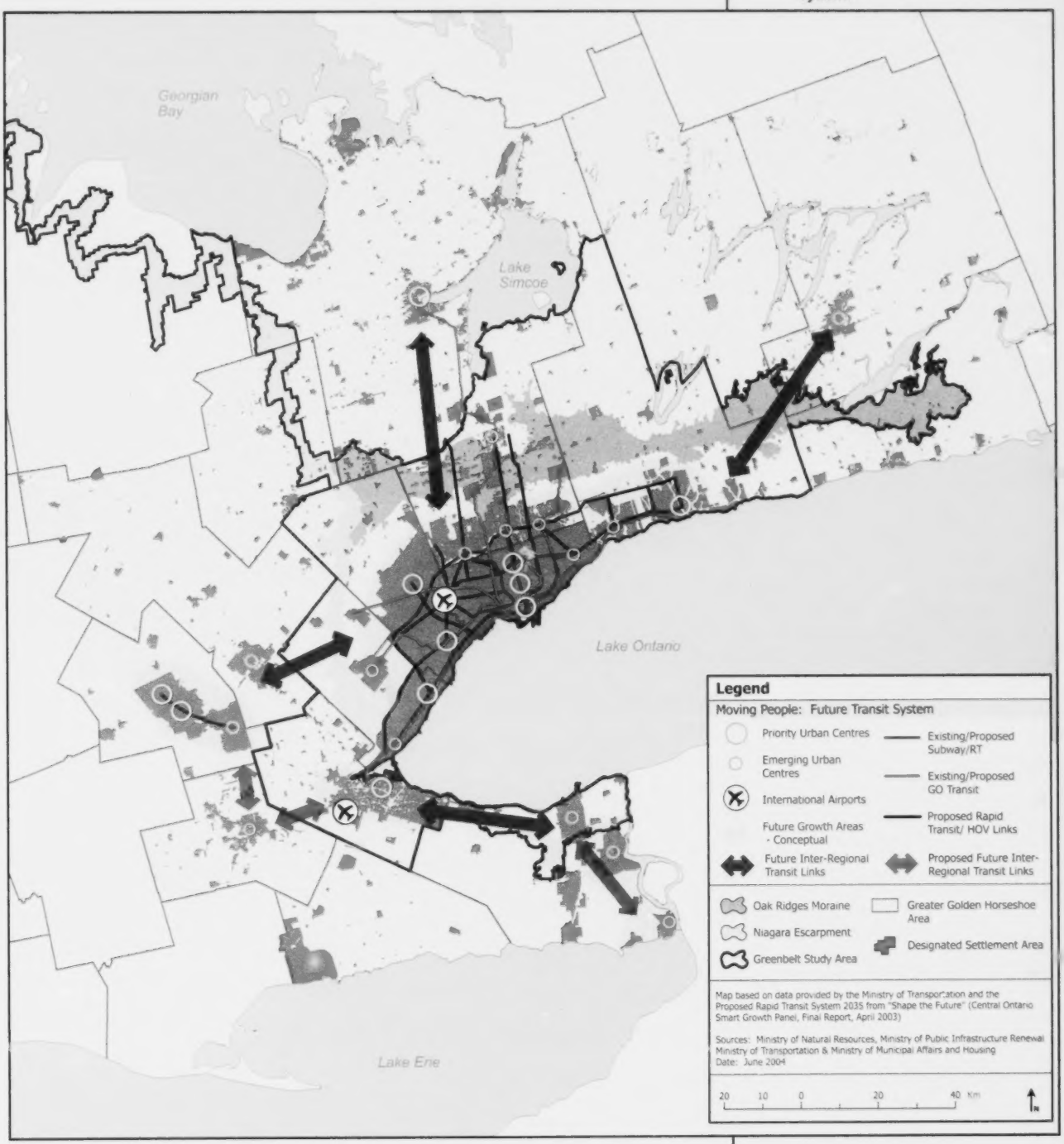
The Puget Sound region in Washington State has more than 170 miles of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on its freeways. An additional 106 miles are in state and regional plans to complete the central Puget Sound Core HOV system. Average car occupancy in non-HOV lanes ranges from 1.07 to 1.14 people per vehicle, whereas the average for HOV lanes ranges from 2.09 to 2.76 people per vehicle. Most transit vehicles also use the HOV lanes.

4. Build a Network of High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes

High occupancy vehicle lanes provide a powerful incentive for people to carpool, reducing congestion and improving efficiency. The province is planning to open its first HOV lanes on Highways 403 through Mississauga and 404 through Toronto and Markham.

Municipalities have also been creating HOV lanes for buses, taxis and cars along major arterial roads. This will just be the start of a broad network of HOV lanes, supported by a growing system of carpool lots and intelligent systems to assist people in making carpooling a viable alternative to riding alone.

Map 5: Moving People: Future Transit System


Georgian Bay
Lake Simcoe
Lake Ontario
Lake Erie
Legend
Moving People: Future Transit System
Priority Urban Centres
Emerging Urban Centres
International Airports
Future Growth Areas - Conceptual
Future Inter-Regional Transit Links
Existing/Proposed Subway/RT
Existing/Proposed GO Transit
Proposed Rapid Transit/ HOV Links
Proposed Future Inter-Regional Transit Links
Oak Ridges Moraine
Niagara Escarpment
Greenbelt Study Area
Greater Golden Horseshoe Area
Designated Settlement Area
Map based on data provided by the Ministry of Transportation and the Proposed Rapid Transit System 2035 from "Shape the Future" (Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel, Final Report, April 2003)
Sources: Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal Ministry of Transportation & Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Date: June 2004
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Strategies for Moving Goods

The other key transportation priority is to move goods within, across and through the Greater Golden Horseshoe to support our manufacturing and commercial industries and provide for improved access for the vital tourism industry.

The following strategies are proposed to support goods movement and tourism, as illustrated on Map 6.

1. The Strategic Goods Movement Network

Some parts of the transportation system are particularly important for the movement of goods, including –

- the highway network, including 400-series highways, the QEW, Gardiner Expressway and Don Valley Parkway
- the mainline rail corridors, providing the east-west connections to national and international markets
- intermodal facilities, providing the key connections between rail and trucking modes of transportation
- the main shipping ports of Hamilton and Toronto on the St. Lawrence Seaway
- the main airports (Pearson International and Hamilton International)
- the border crossings along the Niagara frontier and, further afield, in Windsor and Sarnia.

To support this strategic network, action is necessary. For example, grade separating the east-west freight rail corridor from the north-south GO rail corridors is critical to allow the goods movement system to operate efficiently, and to support expansion of the GO Transit system.

Clogged and inefficient border crossings cost the economy $5.25 billion a year.

Intermodal rail/truck facilities need to have ready access to major highways. And investments will be necessary to relieve congestion at hotspots on the highway system. Investments from all levels of government and from the private sector will be necessary to address these issues.

Similarly, we need to invest in intelligent transportation systems to improve the efficiency of the system. Better systems to manage traffic at border crossings, to respond to incidents on highways, and to allow users to make the best routing choices to their destination will be needed in the future.

2. Future Economic Corridors

Planning is necessary to lay out the future economic corridors. Planning for Highway 407 began in the 1950s, and the highway opened in the 1990s. Without foresight, we can close off options for future infrastructure corridors – for highways, transit, water and

sewer, and other forms of infrastructure so critical to the economic future of the region and the province.

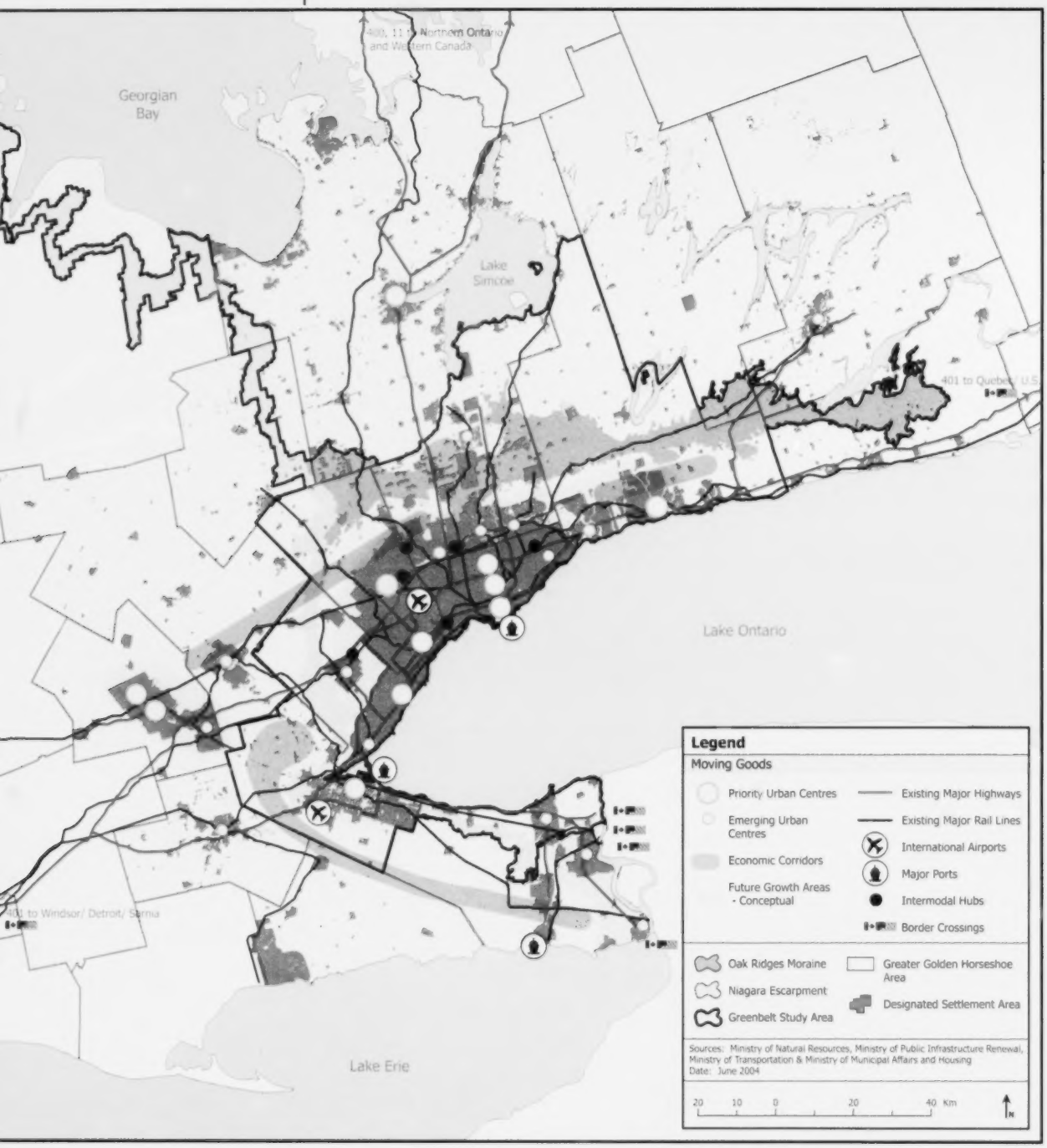
Planning for these economic corridors needs to be different from how it has been done in the past. No longer can we allow interchanges, which simply fuel development pressure and sprawl, to be constructed every few kilometres. No longer can we plan for single-purpose corridors, without planning for transit, highways and other infrastructure needs all at the same time to improve efficiency and reduce impacts. We need to take a best practices approach for how we plan, design, construct and operate economic corridors.

The main routes for economic growth are the connections to the west and the south. For these reasons, this discussion paper includes potential future economic corridors:

- Niagara to the GTA – connecting the Greater Golden Horseshoe with the border crossings at the Niagara frontier.
- The GTA to the Guelph/Kitchener/Waterloo region – connecting the Greater Golden Horseshoe with the high growth centres in Waterloo; and providing relief in the 401 corridor that provides a major link to the border crossings at Windsor and Sarnia.

In addition, the region acts as a node for the rest of the province and eastern Canada, providing critical economic links in the central Ontario transportation network to support provincial and national economic needs. For these reasons, this plan includes the proposed extension of Highway 407 easterly to highways 35 and 115 as a future economic corridor, providing a connection between the GTA and regions to the east.

As a first priority, the focus for transportation through this area will be on existing infrastructure, such as optimizing the use of Highway 400, and extending GO Transit rail service to Barrie. Longer term initiatives, such as the Bradford Bypass, 404 extension and 427 extension are not immediate priorities. Overall transportation capacity for future roads, transit and other forms of infrastructure will continue to be developed in the context of the proposed growth plan. While planning will continue to protect for long-term corridors to ensure eventual capacity as required, the priority in the short- and medium-term will be in the economic corridors outlined above, Highway 400 optimization and transit expansion to support the achievement of the objectives of this growth plan.


Georgian Bay
Lake Simcoe
Lake Ontario
Lake Erie
401 to Quebec/ U.S.
401 to Windsor/ Detroit/ Sarnia
Legend
Moving Goods
Priority Urban Centres
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Sources: Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Ministry of Transportation & Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
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Strategies for Implementation

In addition to the strategies outlined above, the following implementation strategies will be pursued for strengthening transit and alternative transportation modes in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. To move forward, we must –

- establish the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority to support the ongoing development of an integrated transportation system across the region
- provide two cents per litre of the existing provincial gas tax for public transit in the province (starting at one cent in October 2004) and encourage the federal government to support public transit through its gas tax revenues
- continue investing in transit renewal and expansion, involving partnerships among all levels of government
- implement an integrated ticketing system for transit services across the region
- streamline the environmental assessment process, particularly for the transit initiatives contained in the plan
- provide incentives for transit-supportive development and development forms for whatever non-auto modes are viable and attractive
- implement a co-ordinated and integrated approach to transit planning across the region that –
  - invests in priority urban centres within urban areas
  - links priority urban centres within the urban areas of the GTA and Hamilton and Kitchener-Waterloo
  - invests in maintaining and upgrading current municipal transit infrastructure and systems to maximize accessibility, safety and efficiency.
- optimize highway infrastructure and vehicle use, including –
  - planning, designing and constructing HOV lanes on provincial highways and major roads
  - managing traffic incidents more efficiently
  - focusing highway investment to trade corridors and international gateways.

To capitalize on previous infrastructure investment, development along the corridors that link priority urban centres within the GTA, Hamilton and the Kitchener-Waterloo areas will be encouraged by –

- recognizing the intraregional corridors that link priority urban centres in official plans and developing special official plan

policies and alternative development standards for intraregional corridors that reflect growth principles and standards (such as reduced parking requirements for new developments)

- developing a fast track approvals system and special tools to facilitate and spur development along intraregional corridors within the urban areas of GTA, Hamilton and Kitchener-Waterloo
- providing a mechanism for protecting key corridors while they are being studied to assess their need for future uses
- restricting access, prohibiting development, and establishing buffers and environmentally sensitive design for infrastructure located in or through the proposed Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt; and, where possible, minimize the impact of infrastructure development on natural heritage systems such as the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt.

Transportation and transit infrastructure are critical to fulfilling our growth plan objectives. The priority and emerging urban centres identified in this discussion paper, supported by land-use decisions and the transportation investments outlined above, will improve Ontario's landscape, environment, connectivity and livability.

The Minneapolis-St. Paul region's Metro 2040 growth management plan requires an increase in densities at the urban fringe. It is estimated that this will save $1.6 billion on new road and sewer infrastructure over 25 years.

Sustainable Water and Wastewater Services

The capacity of water and wastewater infrastructure helps to determine where growth is possible. Investment in water and wastewater infrastructure has lagged significantly behind growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe as many municipalities are recovering much less than the full cost of their water systems. Some of the challenges facing communities include –

- aging water and wastewater infrastructure
- small, financially unsustainable water and wastewater systems
- inadequate revenue to finance infrastructure repairs and expansion for growth
- large capital investment needs to support new population and employment growth.

In some areas, communities rely on groundwater, inland rivers or lakes for their sources of drinking water. Many of these communities will either face limits to growth as their systems reach capacity, or need to invest in Great-Lakes-based water supply systems, which is a significant and costly undertaking.

At the regional level, we are concerned about where to invest in water and wastewater infrastructure to support future growth, and how to pay for and administer maintenance and upgrading of

existing systems to ensure reliable and safe water throughout.

The *Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act* will make it mandatory for municipalities to assess the full cost of providing their water and sewer services and to prepare long-term cost-recovery plans that consider all operating and capital costs; all sources of revenue; and the investment required to maintain and expand their system.

Full-cost recovery is intended to ensure that adequate financing is available for water and sewer infrastructure over the long term. For most municipalities, this will mean increased rates over an extended period of time to more accurately reflect the true costs of water and wastewater services.

The planning and provision of water and wastewater services has been unco-ordinated across the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Numerous small and large municipalities and the private sector, with and without provincial involvement, have built treatment and distribution facilities to serve local or single-purpose uses. The province has recognized the need to review this situation and is working with stakeholders to assess options for investing, financing and delivering water and wastewater renewal.

A key objective of the growth plan will be to ensure that our infrastructure, such as water pipes and sewage treatment plants, can support development in those places where it makes sense to grow.

Strategies

Water services will play an important role in supporting the growth plan by –

- maintaining and upgrading existing water and wastewater facilities to ensure delivery of clean and safe water and efficient wastewater services
- planning and implementing comprehensive local water conservation strategies, including metering, pricing and efficient technologies
- developing methods of treating stormwater and combined sewer overflows
- regulating water takings in accordance with proposals being developed by the Ministry of the Environment on permits to take water
- assessing the assimilative capacities of the receiving water bodies.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal is leading the development of a long-term water and wastewater infrastructure investment and financing strategy that will consider the best way to provide water and wastewater services in Ontario.

Protecting What is Valuable

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is blessed with unique natural and cultural heritage sites, valuable natural resources and high quality agricultural lands that are critical to Ontario's long-term prosperity and quality of life. The region's greenlands, water resources, agricultural land base, mineral resources and cultural and archaeological heritage provide environmental, economic and social benefits.

We must protect and enhance our valuable resources as part of managing growth. By encouraging growth in those areas that can best accommodate it, the growth plan will help to steer growth pressures away from the places and systems we need to protect.

Building on government initiatives such as the Greenbelt Task Force, the planning reform initiative, watershed-based source protection planning, and the rural strategy, the growth plan will provide a platform and a range of tools for integrating these activities that will collectively address resource protection in Ontario.

Protecting Water Resources

Ontario's water resources supply communities with a source of plentiful and safe drinking water; keep crops, livestock and fish and wildlife habitat healthy; and provide recreational opportunities. Protecting and improving the quality and quantity of this resource is essential for our long-term health, safety and quality of life.

Water comes from a linked system of surface and groundwater features, such as aquifers, headwaters, rivers, stream channels, lakes, recharge and discharge areas, springs and wetlands.

Ontario's water resources are generally protected under the *Environmental Protection Act, the Ontario Water Resources Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Nutrient Management Act, the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act* and the *Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act*. The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan provides further protection for ground and surface water resources.

Safe, clean and abundant drinking water is fundamental to the health and well-being of Ontarians. Having an adequate supply of drinking water is also essential for strong, lasting and prosperous communities. The overall challenge in managing Ontario's water resources is to implement a system that will protect and improve the quality and quantity of water in the future – while at the same time supporting the needs of a growing population and economy.

The province is developing a comprehensive protection framework for drinking water, and is taking steps to protect water resources through several related initiatives, including watershed-

based source water protection, greenbelt protection, nutrient management, and long-term infrastructure planning.

Watershed-based source protection will require the preparation, approval and implementation of source protection plans in all watersheds across Ontario. This initiative will provide an opportunity to establish a system where the protection of drinking water will be considered up-front in land-use planning and other decisions that affect drinking water.

The *Nutrient Management Act* provides authority to set standards for nutrient management. Source water protection is addressed in part by the nutrient management regulation through such requirements as placing restrictions on application of manure and fertilizer and by requiring mandatory planted buffer strips.

As indicated earlier, the *Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act* will require municipalities to assess and report on the full cost of providing their water and wastewater service and to prepare long-term cost-recovery plans. Costs associated with source protection measures would be included.

The growth plan will provide a context for linking decisions regarding growth with the protection of water and requirements for infrastructure at a watershed level.

Strategies

The province will promote integrated and co-ordinated approaches to growth, source water protection and infrastructure planning within specific surface watersheds or ground watersheds by –

- requiring municipalities to take into consideration long-term impacts of growth and infrastructure needs when developing watershed-based source water protection plans
- directing development away from sensitive areas as identified in source protection plans
- regularly assessing impacts of land-use change on water quality, water quantity and related hydrological functions.

Protecting Natural Heritage and Greenspace Systems

The natural heritage features and areas of the Greater Golden Horseshoe provide benefits that contribute to healthy communities and an enhanced quality of life. Collectively, they are the building blocks of a natural heritage system that protects and enhances the health, diversity, abundance and connectivity of our natural environment.

One of the Greater Vancouver Regional District's mandates is to protect a Green Zone. The purpose of the Green Zone is to limit urban expansion and protect watersheds, ecologically important lands and wilderness areas while providing outdoor recreation. The Green Zone currently consists of 205,000 protected hectares in addition to over 50,000 hectares of provincially-designated agricultural reserve land.

The Greater Golden Horseshoe contains many significant natural heritage features, including wetlands; woodlands; kettle lakes; rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitat; and rivers and valleys. It also features the Lake Ontario waterfront, the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine. (See Map 7)

Map 7 : Natural Heritage Features

A natural heritage system is generally made up of natural heritage features and areas, linked by natural corridors necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species and ecosystems. In the Greater Golden Horseshoe, this means our significant natural areas and the

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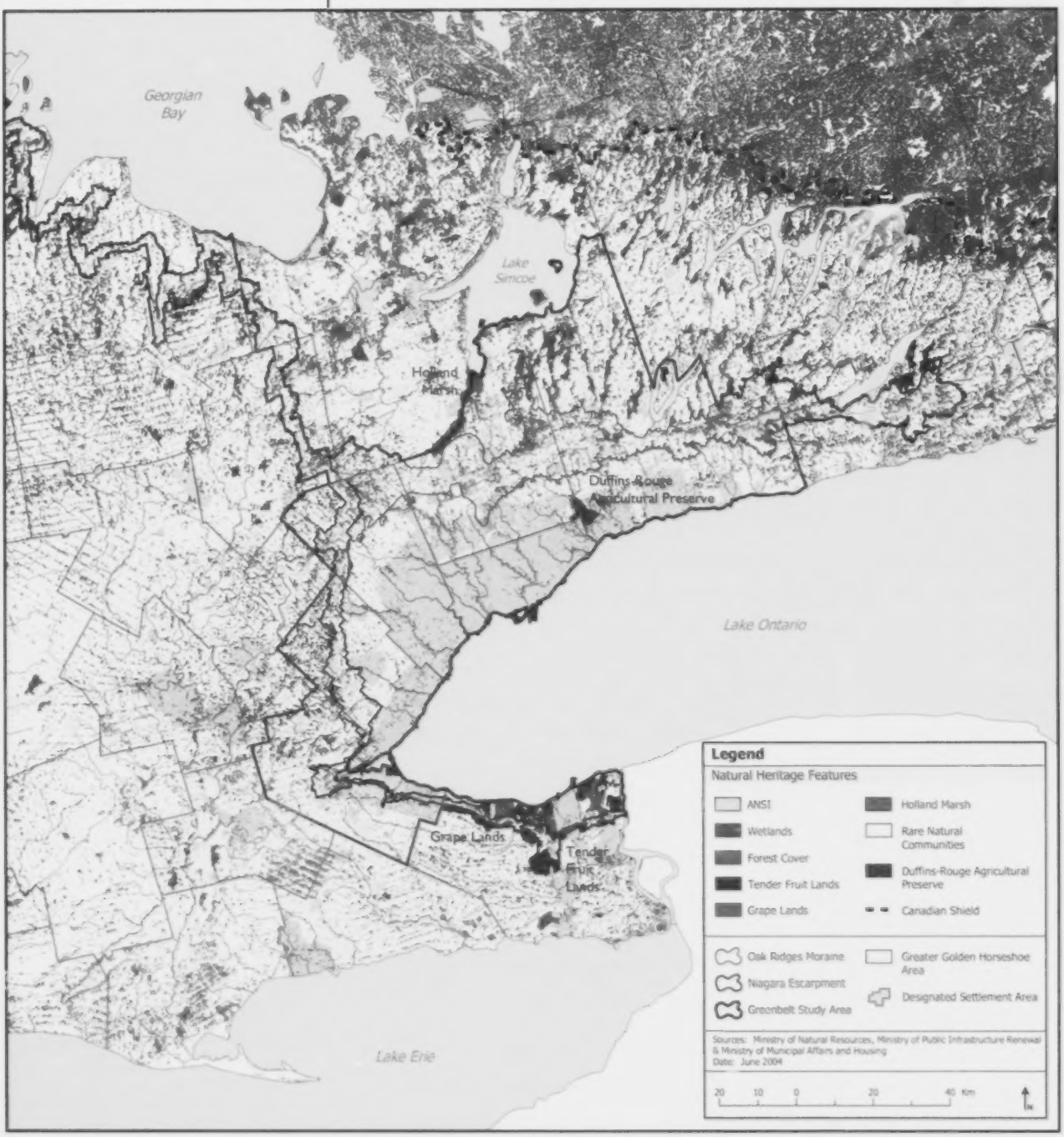


A natural heritage system is generally made up of natural heritage features and areas, linked by natural corridors necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species and ecosystems. In the Greater Golden Horseshoe, this means our significant natural areas and the

green spaces that link them. We need to preserve Ontario's unique biodiversity and habitats.

On a broader scale, greenspace systems are an integral part of the regional fabric and contribute to -

- maintaining the health and diversity of the natural elements of growing communities
- contributing directly to human health and well-being by providing clean air and water and healthy soils
- contributing to the social and economic success of communities through appropriate management and use of natural resources
- contributing to the overall attractiveness of the area as a desirable place to live, work, play and invest in.

Within the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt study area, several tools are already in place to protect important natural features and systems. The Greenbelt Task Force is making recommendations to connect the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine with additional natural heritage systems, agricultural lands and non-renewable resources to create a permanent Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt.

Establishing the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt

Ontario is also committed to establishing a Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt that will be a permanent and sustainable legacy for current and future generations. The provincial government has created a task force that is recommending the scope, content and implementation of a permanent Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt.

The Greenbelt Task Force is studying an area for a greenbelt smaller than the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which includes the GTA, Hamilton, designated tender fruit and grape lands in the Niagara Region, lands under the jurisdiction of the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, and other important natural areas such as the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve. The work of the Task Force is concurrent with this discussion paper. As the recommendations of the Task Force are finalized they will be brought together at the same time that the growth plan is finalized. The Task Force is currently seeking public input on the following vision and goals for the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt:

In February 2004 the province of Ontario established a 13-member multi-stakeholder Greenbelt Task Force to develop recommendations on how the province could most effectively establish a permanent greenbelt. The Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt would be a continuous and connected system of open spaces that will contain sprawl and protect environmentally sensitive lands, valuable resources such as farmland, forests and mineral resources, and the unique character of rural areas. It would be a permanent and sustainable legacy for current and future generations.

Vision

The Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt will be a permanent and sustainable legacy for current and future generations. The greenbelt will enhance our urban and rural areas with a continuous and connected system of open spaces that –

- protects and enhances environmentally sensitive lands and natural heritage systems
- recognizes the region's social, natural and economic needs
- sustains and nurtures the region's agricultural sector
- conserves for sustainable use the region's significant natural resources
- continues to provide high-quality and compatible recreational and tourism opportunities.

Goals

The greenbelt will enhance quality of life by serving an array of functions across the Golden Horseshoe region, including –

- providing greenspace links to and between open space within the region's growing urban areas
- protecting, sustaining and restoring the ecological features and functions of the natural environment
- preserving viable agricultural land as a continuing commercial source of food and employment by recognizing the critical importance of the agriculture sector's prosperity to the regional economy
- sustaining the region's countryside and rural communities
- conserving and making available natural resources critical for a thriving economy
- ensuring that infrastructure investment achieves the environmental, social and economic aims of the greenbelt.

Strategies

The growth plan will provide a context for linking decisions regarding growth with the protection of natural heritage features and systems.

Building on the greenbelt initiative, significant natural heritage features and functions will be protected from urban encroachments and land-use conflicts by –

- defining a natural heritage system for the Greater Golden Horseshoe region that will include –
  - core natural areas such as the Oak Ridges Moraine; Niagara Escarpment; Trent-Severn System, and linkages that connect them to one another and to Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay

- individually significant natural heritage features and functions such as wetlands, areas of natural and scientific interest, and significant woodlands
- a water resources system that comprises surface and groundwater features and hydrological features such as wetlands, streams, sensitive wellhead areas, recharge and discharge areas, sensitive headwaters, aquifers and aquatic habitat
- natural and open rural landscapes and unique and sensitive landforms such as geological features, vistas and panoramas
- a network of open space that can provide opportunities for environmental protection, outdoor recreation, tourism, public access and cultural and natural heritage appreciation

- promoting compact form within settlement areas in or near the greenbelt to reduce development pressures in natural heritage areas
- supporting municipalities in the identification and integration of natural systems and areas into the greenspace or open space fabric of their growth management plans
- providing municipalities with additional tools, through planning reform and other initiatives, that enhance their ability to protect the region's natural heritage system
- improving voluntary incentives to encourage conservation by –
  - expanding land stewardship and public education programs
  - reviewing current property tax incentives to protect greenspace
  - promoting conservation easements
- achieving co-ordinated approaches to assessing impacts of land use change on significant natural heritage features and systems.

Agricultural Resources

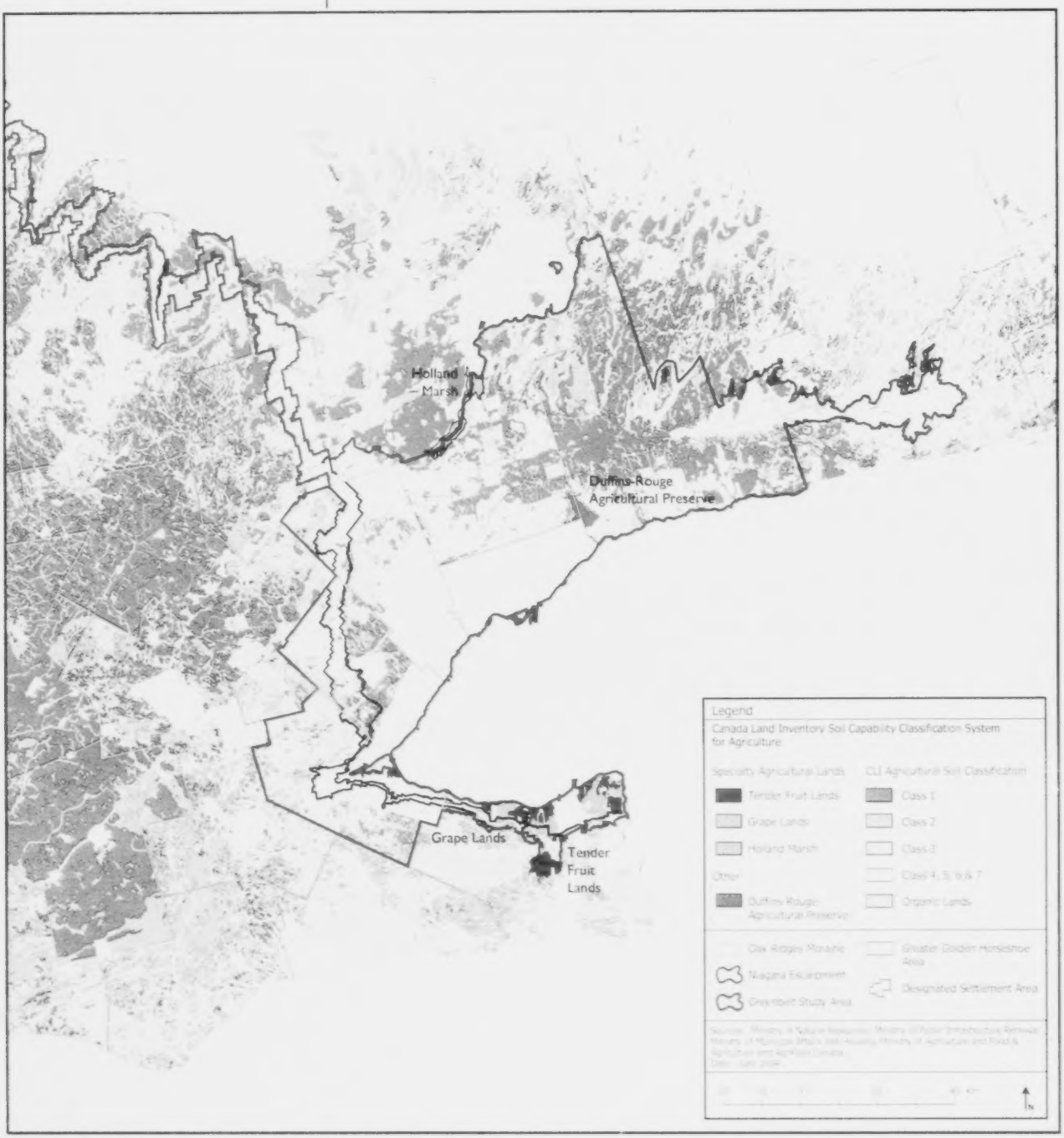
Thanks to the agricultural sector, Ontario enjoys many economic and environmental benefits and support for healthy rural communities.

The agricultural lands of the Greater Golden Horseshoe are considered to be some of the best in the world. The farms in this region generate approximately $3.5 billion in total gross farm receipts. Agricultural lands are a finite resource, and prime agricultural lands such as these are relatively rare. Less than 12 per cent of the province is suitable for agricultural production and only five per cent of Canada's total land base is considered prime agricultural land.

Protecting these agricultural lands is an important part of sustaining Ontario's agriculture and agri-food industry and ensuring

a healthy, viable agriculture sector for the region. The specialty crop areas of the Greater Golden Horseshoe such as the tender fruit and grape lands in Niagara and the Holland Marsh are particularly precious assets recognized by the Greenbelt Task Force as requiring stringent protection from urban expansion and fragmentation so they can remain economically and agriculturally viable. The province is also committed to protecting the Duffins-Rouge agricultural preserve in Pickering. (See Map 8)

Map 8 : Canada Land Inventory Soil Capability Classification System for Agriculture



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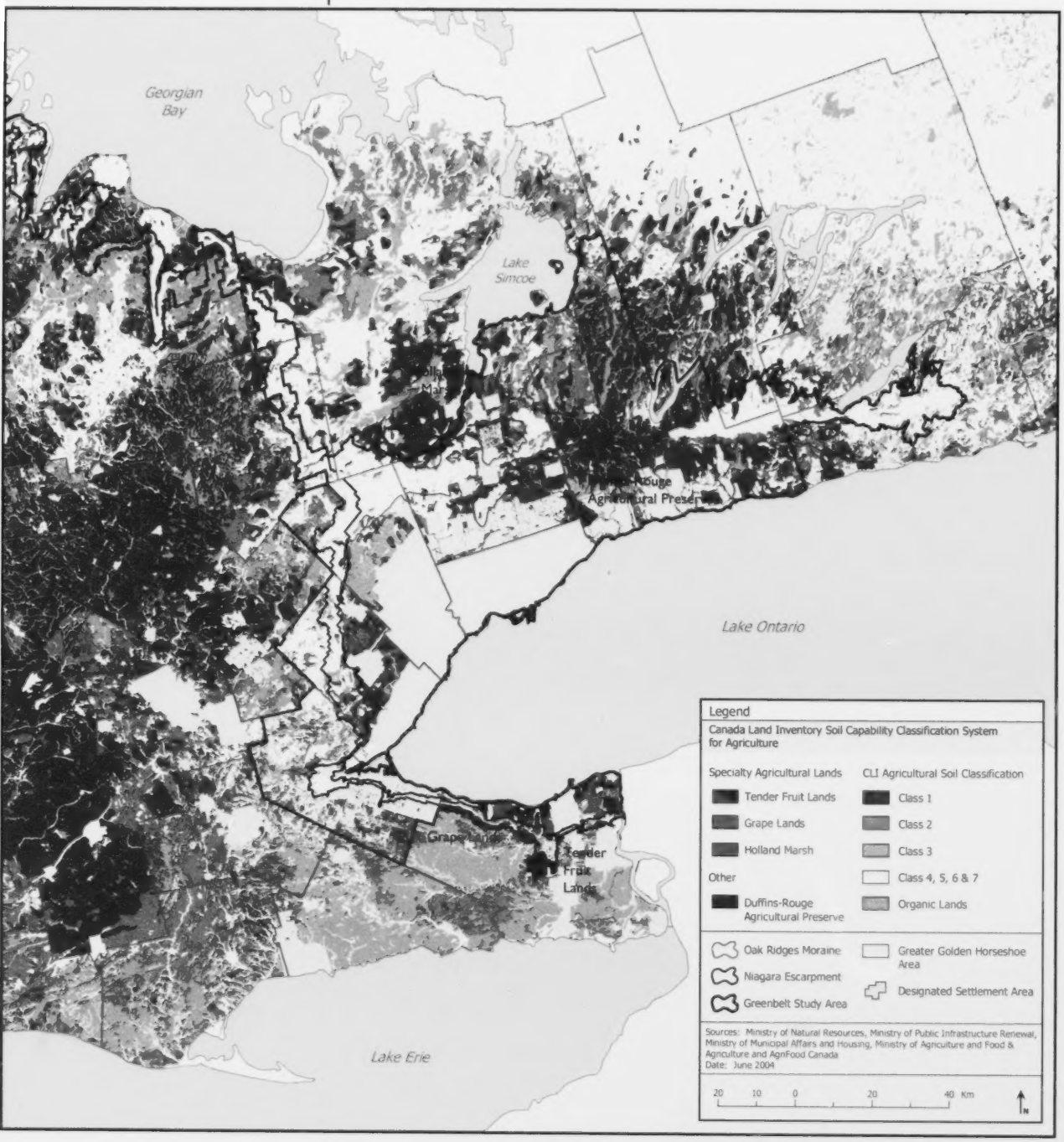


Building on the greenbelt and planning reform initiatives, the growth plan will work with municipalities to protect prime agricultural areas and specialty crop areas beyond the greenbelt for long-term agriculture use and from competing and incompatible land uses.

The plan will ensure that urban boundary expansions onto farmland are considered only when justified and feasible, and do not compromise specialty crop areas and avoid or minimize the use of prime agricultural land.

In support of that objective, the Provincial Policy Statement requires prime agricultural areas to be protected for long-term agricultural use. The expansion of settlement areas into prime agricultural areas is permitted only where the need for the expansion has been justified, and only where less valuable agricultural lands are not available. Additionally, settlement area expansions onto specialty croplands are proposed to be prohibited by the Provincial Policy Statement.

Protecting agricultural lands is one aspect of creating the conditions necessary for agricultural communities to thrive. The protection of agricultural areas from competing and incompatible land uses will maintain options for meeting present and future needs, to allow those engaged in agriculture to carry on their operations with a minimum of disturbance and to create opportunities for agricultural production.

In the Greater Golden Horseshoe, agricultural uses and activities and normal farm practices will be promoted and protected in order to foster and support a vibrant and healthy agricultural economy.

The Greenbelt Task Force and the Provincial Agricultural Advisory Team are also considering issues related to the protection of agricultural land and the sustainability of the agricultural sector. Ongoing co-ordination with the growth plan will be required so that important agricultural areas will be appropriately identified and protected.

Strategies

The province is proposing to protect prime agricultural areas, including specialty croplands such as the tender fruit lands, from urban encroachments and land use conflicts by –

- establishing a Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt for selected lands within the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- reviewing the land-use planning system through the planning reform initiative towards finding the balance that protects the land base in the long term and allows farmers to have the flexibility to change their operations over time
- promoting approaches to future growth areas that support

compact form within settlement areas and focussing growth around centres and along corridors in order to reduce development pressures on agricultural lands; and setting targets for intensification, density, housing mix and phasing of development

- promoting initiatives such as nutrient management, stewardship, and normal farm practices to protect and enhance agricultural uses, value-added agricultural activities, and where appropriate, supporting infrastructure for agriculture
- promoting research and development in the agricultural sector leading to value-added opportunities
- supporting the work of the Provincial Agricultural Advisory Team as it relates to the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Mineral Aggregate Resources

Mineral aggregate resources such as limestone, sand, gravel, clay, shale and sandstone are required for the development and maintenance of Ontario's infrastructure. The Greater Golden Horseshoe region produces and consumes more than 90 million tons of aggregates annually. (See Map 9)

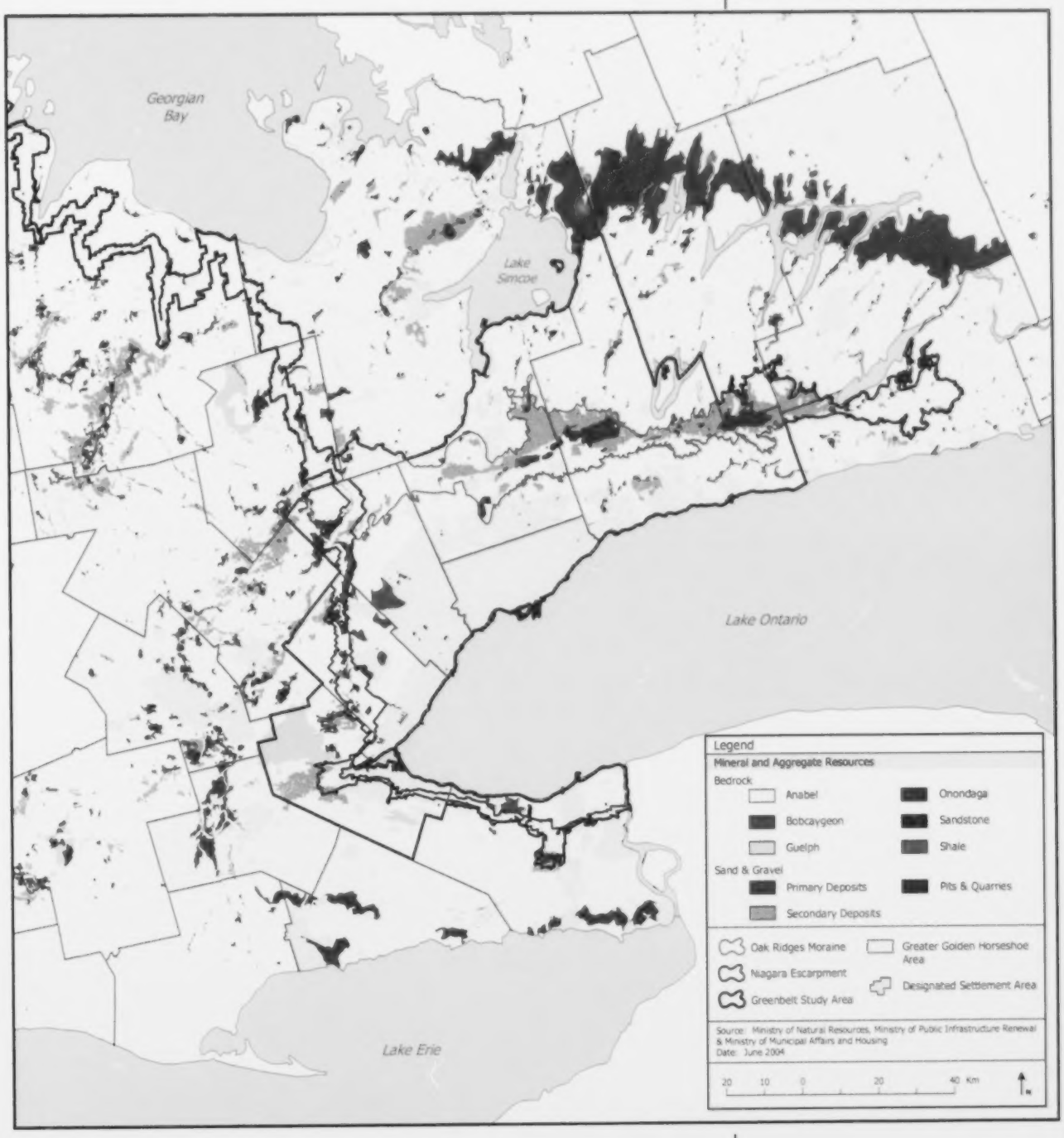
One of the challenges for the Greater Golden Horseshoe is to balance the ongoing need for mineral aggregate resources with the need to keep the local impact of extraction activities to a minimum.

Strategies

Conservation of aggregate resources will be promoted through an increased focus on reuse and recycling of materials and by reducing demand through more compact urban form and more efficient use of infrastructure. Strategies include –

- protecting high potential aggregate areas that have been identified as high priority due to their quality, accessibility, and availability of the resource
- undertaking extraction and rehabilitation in a timely manner and in keeping with post-extraction uses that support the objectives of the growth plan
- working with municipalities and the industry to explore more effective and innovative ways to make aggregates available to the marketplace while at the same time minimizing impacts on the local community.

All the above strategies need to achieve a balance between mineral resource extraction and the protection of natural heritage features and functions.


Georgian Bay
Lake Simcoe
Lake Ontario
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Legend
Mineral and Aggregate Resources
Bedrock
Anabel
Bobcaygeon
Guelph
Onondaga
Sandstone
Shale
Sand & Gravel
Primary Deposits
Secondary Deposits
Pits & Quarries
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Greenbelt Study Area
Greater Golden Horseshoe Area
Designated Settlement Area
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Date: June 2004
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Implementation: Moving Forward

Plans and policies are only as successful as their implementation. Action is required on several fronts to ensure that the growth plan is implemented in the most effective manner.

This requires a significant effort from all levels of government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and residents of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Effective implementation will also require a change in the way we behave, make decisions, plan and work together.

Full implementation requires a number of steps:

1. **Provincial Leadership and Partnership:** the province will work to ensure its programs and investments in the Greater Golden Horseshoe are based on the growth plan. The province will assist and collaborate with stakeholders, including municipal governments, to implement the plan.
2. **Effective Implementation Tools:** the province will evaluate, implement and recommend regulatory and fiscal tools and programs to assist municipalities and other stakeholders with implementing the growth plan.
3. **Legislative Framework:** the growth plan may require legislation to ensure the implementation of clear roles and responsibilities, and consistency with various other acts.
4. **Monitoring and Review:** the province will monitor the implementation of the plan and assess its impact on quality of life and the performance of communities.

Provincial Leadership and Partnership

Working Together

Acting on the plan will require the co-operation of all stakeholders and the development of partnerships across sectors and regions – including the people who live and work in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

A broad partnership strategy will involve working with municipal partners and stakeholders to provide a consistent set of demographic projections and develop pilot and demonstration projects. This strategy will include education and training components such as guidelines, workshops, manuals, websites and e-learning.

A public engagement strategy will focus on involving and educating citizens on their role in the implementation of the plan.

The provincial government recently announced that the Premier will appoint a provincial facilitator to assist the industry and stakeholders on issues that arise as we implement the growth plan.

The provincial facilitator will work with affected parties to resolve conflicts that may arise during the implementation of the plan.

In addition, a blue ribbon panel consisting of respected leaders in municipal governance, growth management, business and environment will be established by the province to monitor and advise on the implementation of the plan.

Getting the House in Order

Many aspects of the growth plan affect the operations of provincial ministries. To ensure that the plan is fully implemented and that the government provides the necessary leadership, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, as the central agency for growth planning, will need to review and ensure that other ministry activities mutually reinforce the directions of the growth plan.

Interministerial committees to address growth initiatives are already established and can continue to be the forum for the review of government activities to ensure consistent support for growth.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal will co-ordinate policies across ministries, promote alignment of federal, provincial and municipal policies and investment, and report results regularly to Cabinet. The ministry will also –

- ensure provincial conformity with the Greater Golden Horseshoe growth plan, including the 10-year provincial infrastructure investment plan
- assist and advise ministries and stakeholders in implementing the growth plan
- promote the development and use of implementation tools and other incentives, including establishing a new infrastructure financing and procurement policy framework
- regularly monitor and review the plan, including developing and reporting a community livability index to measure the effectiveness of the plan in improving quality of life.

Possible Regulatory and Planning Tools to Support Implementation of the Growth Plan

Upper-Tier and Single-Tier Growth Plans are documents that set out long-term goals and priorities at an upper-tier level. They inform the development of local official plans by providing direction on matters such as population growth, regional transportation priorities and infrastructure plans.

Community Improvement Plans are municipally developed plans, under the *Planning Act*, initially intended to promote revitalization of underused areas. The provisions allow lower-tier or single-tier municipalities to establish grant and loan programs, which would normally be prohibited.

The Development Permit System combines features of the zoning, site plan and minor variance processes into one system, so a development permit can replace separate approvals under those three processes. Its goal is to promote economic development through faster approvals, increased flexibility and a better understanding in the development sector of what is permitted up front.

Effective Implementation Tools

The right mix of tools is needed to assist in the implementation of the plan.

Possible Fiscal Tools to Support Implementation of the Growth Plan

Full-Cost Pricing for Infrastructure considers all of the operating and capital costs of an asset over its useful life.

Life-Cycle Pricing considers the full spectrum of costs, benefits and impacts on the community over the long term, including maintenance, environmental and social impacts and financing methods.

Tax Increment Financing, commonly referred to as TIF, allows a municipality to capture and pool anticipated increases in property taxes - derived from area improvements - and pledge this revenue towards the financing of infrastructure improvements to attract new development.

Development Charges allow a municipality to recoup the incremental costs of new development subject to the provisions of the *Development Charges Act*.

Land Transfer Tax will be examined as a tool to promote more compact development.

Property Tax Reform is used by other jurisdictions to provide tax incentives to properties in priority urban centres and support higher densities in commercial and industrial development, as well as in residential development.

Location-Efficient Mortgages are used in many U.S. cities and allow a mortgage lender to recognize the cost savings of living in communities well served by transit.

A number of tools are already in place (*Planning Act*, municipal official plans, development charges), but need to be changed or strengthened to be more effective for implementation. For example, the planning reform initiative is consulting on a broad range of land-use planning system reforms, including new and revised tools to support more effective planning and strong communities.

A number of other tools are being used in other jurisdictions with great success. These tools need to be assessed as to their value and would need to be tailored to create the right mix of incentives in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

A combination of improved existing tools and new innovative tools are needed to create the right incentives (such as achieving intensification and attracting investment to priority urban centres). Also, barriers to implementing the plan need to be identified and removed.

This mix of tools will include both regulatory and planning as well as fiscal tools.

Regulatory Tools

Regulatory and planning tools are those that fall under the *Planning Act*, including official plans and zoning. The current planning reform initiatives will result in a number of changes that will make the land-use planning and development process more effective in promoting strong communities as well as support the implementation of the growth plan.

The revised Provincial Policy Statement will provide stronger, clearer directions to support such growth management objectives as compact form, intensification, identifying priority urban centres, protecting the environment, and supporting strategic infrastructure investments.

The discussion paper also provides directions for developing upper-tier and single-tier growth plans at the regional or county level. At the local level, community improvement plans can provide the framework to offer the same fiscal tools or incentives to facilitate intensification and redevelopment.

A fast-track approvals process for projects supportive of growth plans or community improvement plans can provide further incentive for developing in established urban areas.

Fiscal Tools

There are a wide variety of fiscal tools that provide innovative options to implement the plan's key directions.

Existing tools, such as development charges, have been in use for many years. A review of development charges can provide an opportunity to consider ways in which they can be modified to ensure new development pays for its fair share of the costs of growth, and to further support growth in developed urban areas with existing infrastructure.

The government will also look at fiscal tools such as the Land Transfer Tax rebate program to determine whether these tools could be used to encourage people to buy homes in existing urban areas.

In earlier consultations, many municipalities also asked the government to investigate new fiscal tools. We will be consulting with municipalities and other stakeholders as we move forward with the plan.

The text box on page 50 contains a brief description of some key tools that are used in other jurisdictions to promote positive change. Some tools may be more applicable for priority urban centres while others may be applicable for all communities.

The province will undertake a more detailed review of implementation tools to identify the appropriate set of tools to assist in the implementation of the growth plan.

Legislative Framework

The growth plan may require provincial legislation to ensure compliance and ongoing municipal implementation of growth strategies, and to amend existing legislation that may be inconsistent with it.

If the legislation is established it will need to be clear and consistent with other legislation that relates to municipalities and other stakeholders, such as the *Municipal Act, Planning Act*, and *Environmental Assessment Act* and existing provincial plans, including the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

Possible legislation could –

- require the province to adopt a growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and other regions of the province

- establish roles and responsibilities of the province and municipalities regarding implementation of the growth plan and to ensure compliance with its directions
- establish a time frame for review of the plan and reporting on performance benchmarks (e.g. performance report)
- link to other existing provincial land-use planning and infrastructure legislation and regulations
- require upper-tier and single-tier growth plans to conform with the plan and be implemented through municipal official plans and capital budgets.

Monitoring and Review

No plan is complete if its implementation and effectiveness cannot be monitored. A key outcome of this process will be a comprehensive assessment of the plan's implementation. Another outcome will be a review of its impact on quality of life in the communities affected.

Strategies

Full implementation of the strategies of the growth plan will be achieved by –

- ensuring that there are appropriate governance mechanisms to support the plan, such as provincial facilitator and blue ribbon panel
- developing an appropriate mix of regulatory and fiscal tools to assist ministries, municipalities and other stakeholders to implement the plan
- reviewing all activities and policies of the Ontario government to identify any inconsistencies with the goals of the plan
- developing partnerships with municipalities as required to achieve consensus on growth assumptions and the implementation of the plan through municipal official plans
- reviewing the plan on a regular basis, every five years
- monitoring the performance of the plan and the livability and sustainability of communities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The need for legislation that provides status for the growth plan will be considered.

The development and reporting of a community livability index for the Greater Golden Horseshoe could be used to measure

The province has established a pilot project to test the development permit system (DPS) in the City of Toronto, the City of Hamilton, the Town of Oakville, the Regional Municipality of Waterloo and the Township of Lake of Bays. The five DPS pilot project areas were selected to test how the system could work to promote compatible development in historic and downtown areas, revitalize brownfields, protect sensitive shorelands, and protect sensitive wellhead areas.

communities against key indicators in the areas of urban form, environmental quality and economic vitality.

The index will provide a snapshot of the performance of communities and the effectiveness of the implementation of the strategies of the plan. Specific indicators can include increased transit ridership, housing types and affordability, length of and number of commuter trips, reduced domestic smog-causing air emissions, number and size of brownfield projects, and rate of export growth.

Next Steps

Achieving positive and healthy growth, which contributes to the future prosperity of our communities while maximizing our investment and minimizing costs, requires a strategic and co-ordinated plan. Our communities and the land and resources required for accommodating future growth are valuable but finite assets that we need to sustain and continue to use efficiently and effectively.

The growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe will provide the broad framework, vision and tools for making critical decisions about our future that will result in a high quality of life with a prosperous economy, livable communities and a sustainable environment.

The plan will build on the past work of many partners and integrate related aspects of key provincial government initiatives to help us plan and decide where and how to grow, what strategic infrastructure investments we need to make to support this growth, how to protect what is valuable, and how to make it all happen.

To achieve the kind of future we want for ourselves and future generations requires real change – in the way we behave, provide leadership, co-ordinate decisions and actions, as well as the way we plan and work together. The growth plan will provide that guidance, but successful implementation requires the contributions of all stakeholders, governments, businesses, institutions, community groups and residents.

The growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe will be an important document in shaping our future in terms of our economy, built and natural environments and quality of life. We invite you to attend one of our information sessions throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe in the early summer of 2004. Tell us what you think, share your ideas and be part of creating better choices and a brighter future for Ontario.

Submit comments by September 24, 2004

To submit your comments electronically, you can complete an online survey at www.placestogrow.pir.gov.on.ca

Written comments can also be submitted to –

Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe
Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal
Smart Growth Secretariat
777 Bay Street, 16th floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

Fax: 416-585-7639
E-mail: placestogrow@pir.gov.on.ca

For more information or to order additional copies of the discussion paper, please call our toll free line at 1-866-479-9781. Toronto-area residents can call 416-585-6746.

Appendix

Glossary of Terms

10-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan

The government is developing a 10-year infrastructure investment plan for Ontario that will set out a comprehensive plan of action. It will guide the building and modernization of water and wastewater treatment, health care and education facilities. It will improve public transit services and co-ordination to reduce gridlock. It will create new affordable housing units. It will also address other strategic infrastructure priorities.

Aggregate

Aggregate (mineral aggregate) is a non-renewable mineral resource that is vital for infrastructure construction and maintenance. Aggregates consist predominantly of sand, gravel, clay and bedrock (including stone used to produce concrete, cement, lime or clay bricks).

Balanced Growth

Increases in population and employment that are distributed in such a way that no single community is predominantly single-use, and municipalities achieve a mix of residential and business uses.

Brownfields

Lands that may include vacant, underused or abandoned industrial buildings, gas stations, or old mining and forestry sites in rural settings. These lands are ideal for intensification for industrial, commercial or residential uses.

Compact Development

Compact development is a land-use pattern of medium- and high-density urban development that encourages efficient use of land, walkable neighbourhoods, mixed land uses (residential, retail, workplace and institutional all within one neighbourhood), proximity to transit and reduced need for infrastructure.

"Compact" is a relative term and will mean different effective densities in small towns as compared to big cities. Compact development does not necessarily mean high-rise development.

Emerging Urban Centres

Emerging urban centres have some of the characteristics of priority urban centres, but not all. Over time, as the region grows and additional investments are made, they too will become the hubs and emerge as regional centres of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Many of these emerging urban centres have already been identified as key targets for future growth in municipal official plans.

Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is defined as the cities of Toronto, Hamilton and Kawartha Lakes; the regional municipalities of Halton, Peel, York, Durham, Waterloo, and Niagara; and the counties of Haldimand, Brant, Wellington, Dufferin, Simcoe, Northumberland and Peterborough.

Greater Toronto Transportation Authority

A proposed organization that seeks to co-ordinate transportation planning and investment at a regional level and ensure seamless transit in the Greater Toronto Area.

Greenbelt Task Force

A diverse group of stakeholders appointed in February 2004 by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to develop recommendations on how the province could most effectively establish a permanent Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt. In May 2004, the task force released a discussion paper that outlines a number of proposed approaches for a Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt.

Greenfields

Undeveloped land, usually located in suburban or countryside areas that may or may not currently be used for farming or recreational purposes.

Greyfields

Former and underused retail developments. Greyfields are good candidates for intensification as they are often located along key transportation routes.

Growing Strong Rural Communities Plan

A plan that seeks to ensure that the province's rural communities enjoy prosperous economies, rich cultural and natural heritage, and the capacity and leadership to sustain and enhance a high quality of life.

Higher Order Transit/Rapid Transit

Transit that operates in its own right-of-way, outside of mixed traffic, and therefore can achieve a frequency of service greater than mixed-traffic transit. Higher order transit can include heavy rail (such as subways), light rail (such as streetcars), and buses in separate rights-of-way.

Infill

The term generally refers to small-scale development or redevelopment on vacant or underused land within built-up areas of existing communities, where infrastructure is already in place.

Infrastructure

The basic systems and services that a region or organization requires in order to operate effectively. Infrastructure is typically described in two categories – hard and soft. Hard infrastructure is traditionally defined as physical structures, such as roads and highways, transit, airports, ports, water and sewage treatment facilities, schools, hospitals and telecommunications hardware. Soft infrastructure is traditionally defined as the programs and services provided in a community, such as skills training, health care and education.

Intensification

The term generally refers to larger scale development or redevelopment within existing urbanized areas that has the effect
of increasing the density within an area.

Natural Heritage System

A system of natural core areas and key natural corridors or linkages, such as rivers and valleys, with significant ecological value. They collectively perform important ecological functions, such as providing habitat and improving air and water quality.

Planning Reform

The planning reform initiative is a review of Ontario's land-use planning system. The components of planning reform include Bill 26, (the proposed Strong Communities [Planning Amendment] Act), the five-year review of the Provincial Policy Statement, Ontario Municipal Board reform and implementation tools that may be needed to achieve the government's strong communities objectives.

Priority Urban Centres

Priority urban centres have existing infrastructure – for water, wastewater, transportation, educational, health and social services, institutions and industrial activity – that can be built upon, and the capacity to absorb further residential and employment growth in an efficient manner.

Provincial Policy Statement

This statement is issued under the *Planning Act* to provide policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land-use planning and development. A discussion paper proposed revisions to the Provincial Policy Statement was released in June 2004.

Resources

Includes agricultural lands, natural-heritage features, forests, water resources, and mineral aggregates. Resources are recognized for their ecological and economic values.

Settlement Areas

Lands designated through the municipal planning process for building or development – urban, suburban or rural. This includes all development, ranging from dense urban to hamlets and other small residential development.

Smart Growth

Smart Growth is an integrated and innovative approach to sustainable urban development and growth that is being implemented in more than 200 jurisdictions worldwide.

Wastershed-Based Source Protection

Source water protection is the first barrier in a multi-barrier approach to protecting the water in Ontario's lakes, rivers and underground aquifers. Source water protection complements water treatment by reducing the risk that water gets contaminated in the first place. Watershed-based planning takes the natural boundaries of surface and groundwater into consideration, rather than man-made lines drawn on a map.

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[1] Bourne, Larry S. Social Change in the Central Ontario Region: An Issues Paper. September 2002

[2] Conference Board of Canada 2000 statistics, based on GDP of Ontario: $354.8 billion; GDP of GTA, Hamilton, Waterloo and Niagara: $210.6 billion or approximately 60% of Ontario total.

[3] Neptis Foundation. Toronto-Related Region Futures Study. August, 2002 p132

[4] ibid

[5] Gridlock in Central Ontario. MAH. August 14, 2002. http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/userfiles/HTML/nts_1_5861_1.html ("Congestion in the GTA and Hamilton is estimated to cost the economy $2 billion per year because it delays the movement of goods.") Also, Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel Report. p. 8 ($1.8 billion per year); Toronto Board of Trade. A Strategy for Rail-Based Transit in the GTA. p. 3. ("The cost of congestion to business could reach $3.0 billion annually, or 1.3% of regional GDP by 2021."); UDI 2001. ($1.9 billion per year in the GTA)

[6] Neptis Foundation. Toronto-Related Region Futures Study. August, 2002. p137 (also Central Onatrio Smart Growth Panel Report p8)

[7] Gridlock in Central Ontario. MAH. August 14, 2002 http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/userfiles/HTML/nts_1_5861_1.html ("The number of smog advisories in the Toronto area has increased from a total of one in 1993 to 20 in 2001.")

[8] CMHC Core Housing Need Indicator, based on 2001 Census data

[9] GTA Task Force, Greater Toronto: Report of the GTA Task Force January 1996 p12 (additional references in Slack, 2002 Municipal Finance and the Pattern of Urban Growth. C.D. Howe Institute. No. 160, and TD Economics Greater Toronto Area: Canada's Primary Economic Locomotive in Need of Repairs, May 2002 p15)

[10] Neptis Foundation. Toronto-Related Region Futures Study. August, 2002. p50; The Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association. Growth and Urban Land Need in Ontario. February, 2003

[11] www.smartgrowth.org

[12] GTA Task Force 1996. Report of the GTA Task Force. Toronto: Queen's Printer.

[13] Go Transit

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[15] Ministry of Natural Resources, 2003

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